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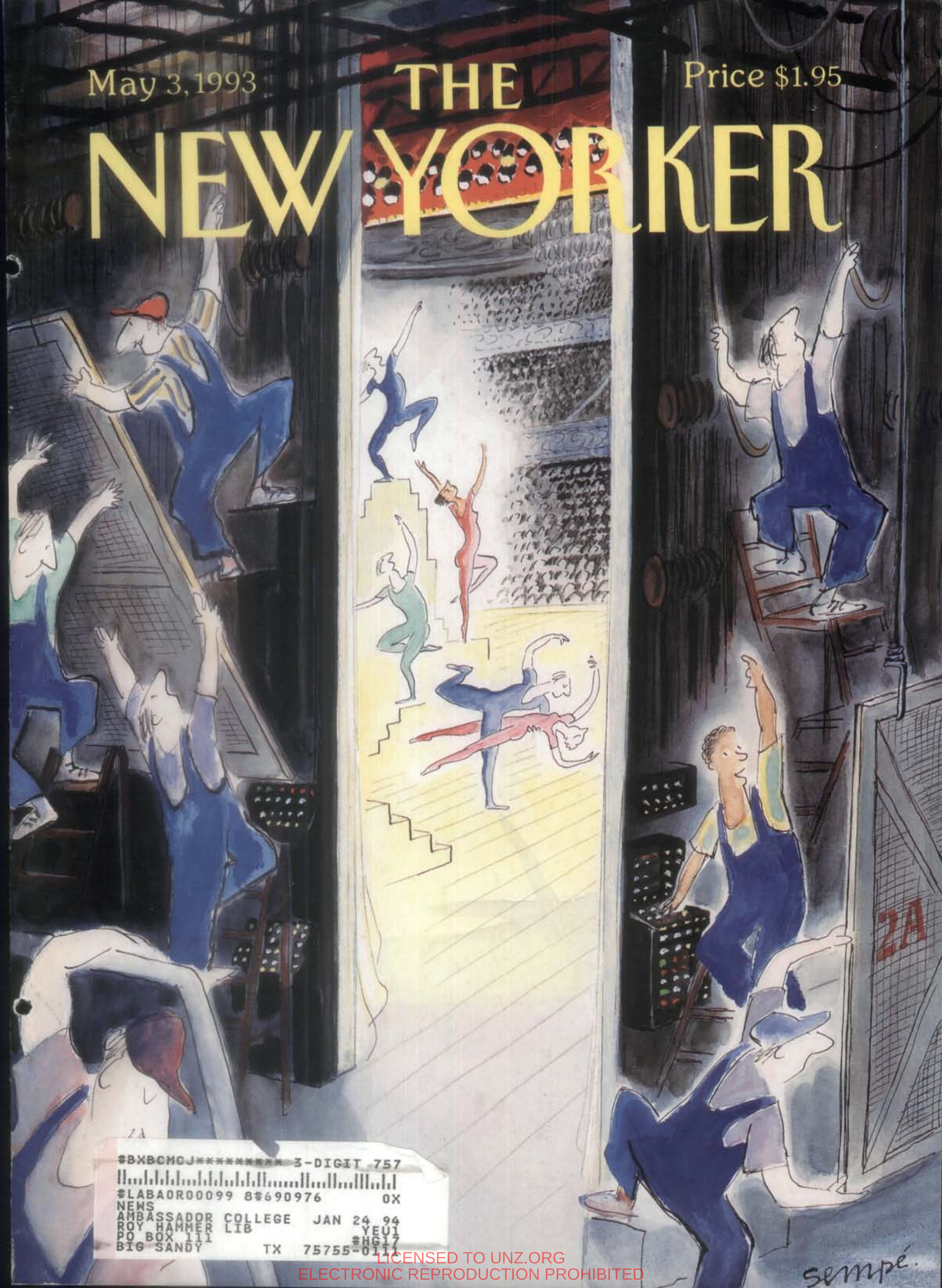

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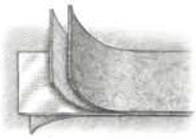

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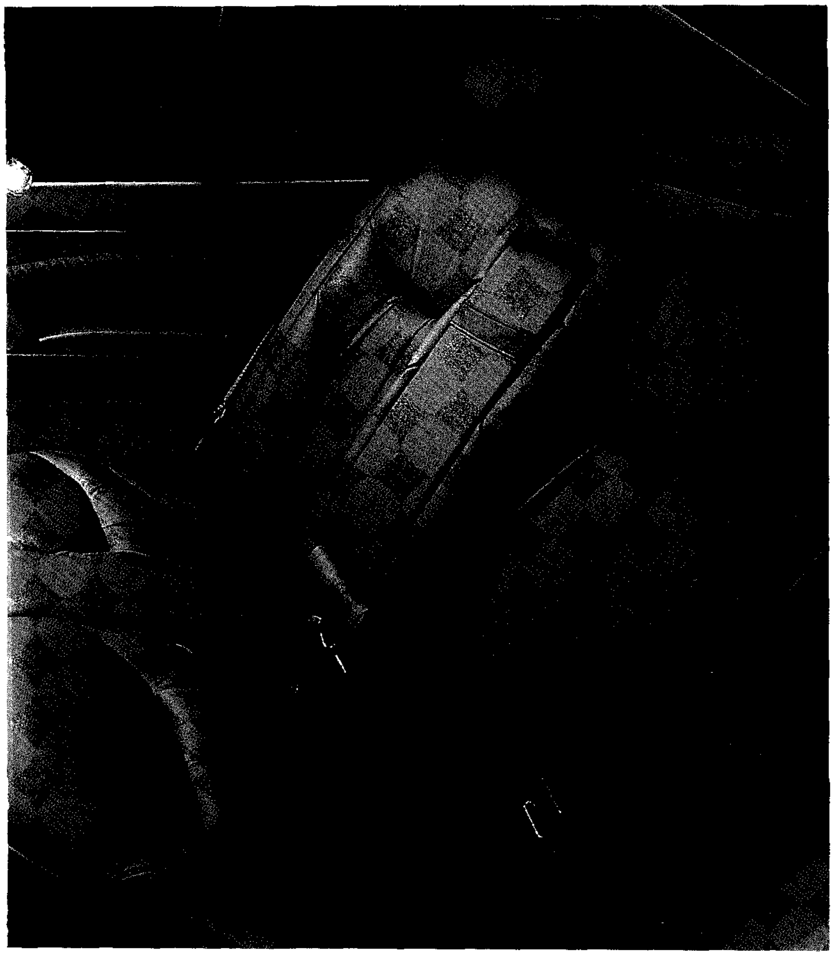

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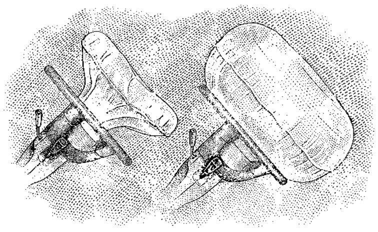

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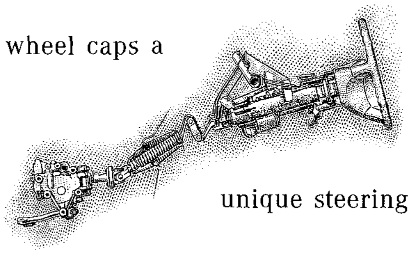

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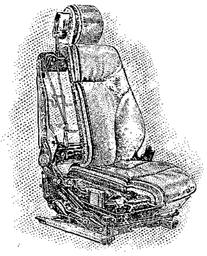

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THE NEW YORKER

MAY 3, 1993

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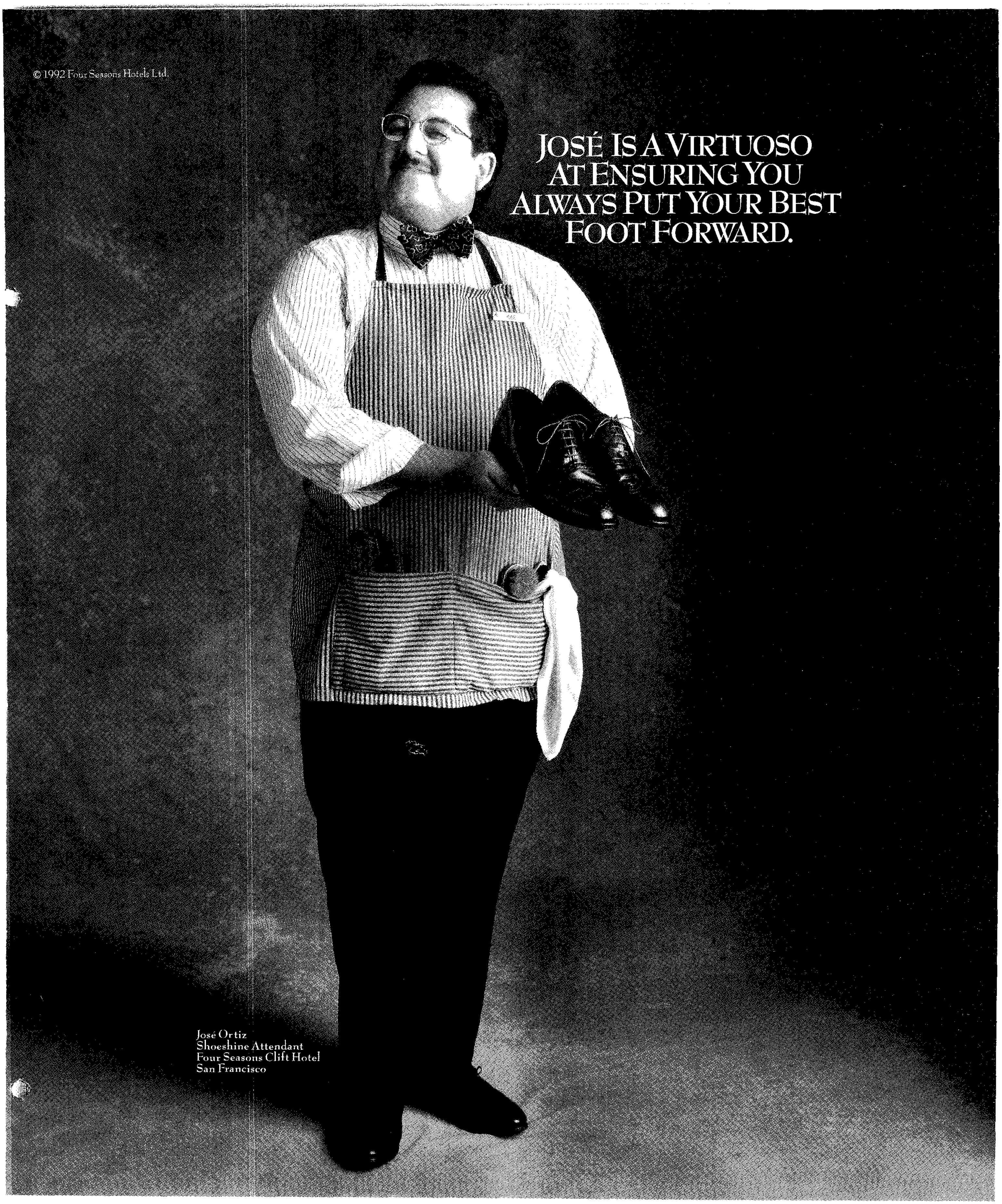

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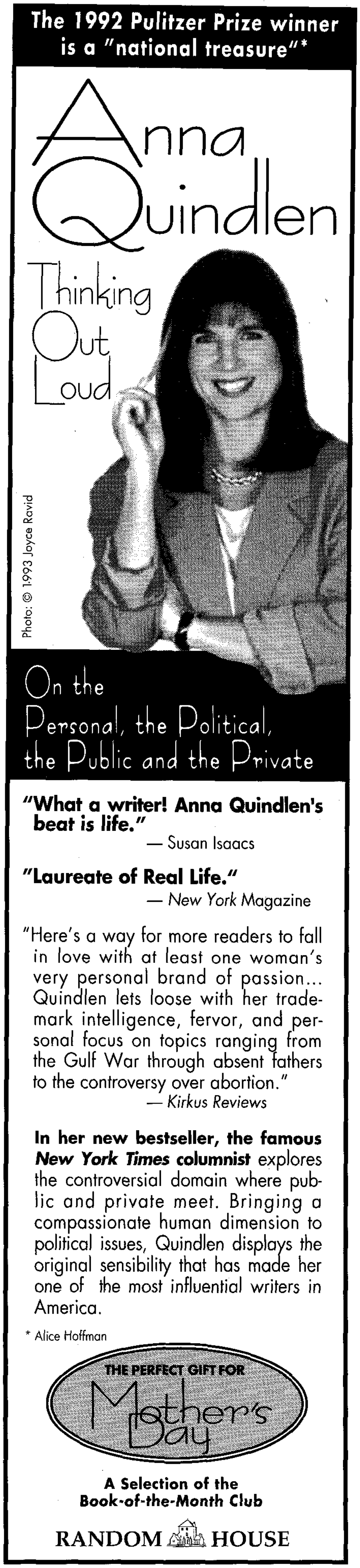

The 1992 Pulitzer Prize winner is a "national treasure"*

Anna Quindlen

Thinking Out Loud

Photo: © 1993 Joyce Ravid

On the Personal, the Political, the Public and the Private

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* Alice Hoffman

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RANDOM HOUSE

COMMENT

PROPHET'S FULFILLMENT

David Koresh was indeed a prophet. For years, he and his followers stockpiled weapons and gas masks, hoarded canned goods and toilet paper, and fortified their isolated compound. They buried a bus, to serve as a ready-made underground bunker, and were in the process of constructing a network of tunnels. They installed three gasoline-storage tanks to supply their emergency electrical generators. Koresh preached that the destiny of the Branch Davidians was to perish in a fiery Armageddon. "He wanted to have as many people killed in that compound as possible," Bob Ricks, the F.B.I. spokesman in Waco, said when it was over. "That is why it was named Ranch Apocalypse."

The government was accommodating enough to play out the role that Koresh had assigned it. For nearly a year, various alarms had brought the Branch Davidians to the government's attention. A cable from the United States Embassy in Australia in April, 1992, informed the State Department of a tip from someone familiar with the sect that the Davidians were contemplating mass suicide. In the ensuing months, there were also allegations of child abuse and of federal weapons violations. It remains unclear, though, how seriously these other issues figured in the decision to launch the initial raid on the compound. Child-welfare officials in Texas had earlier conducted an investigation, apparently without finding cause for intervention. Last July, a driver for the United Parcel Service reported to the McLennan County Sheriff's Department that he had delivered a suspicious package to the Davidians; according to one account, a box had broken open, exposing grenade cannisters. The local authorities thereupon called the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and it began monitoring shipments of gun parts, ammunition, and explosive chemicals. By themselves, all the items monitored are legal and are easily acquired through the classified ads of magazines for weapons enthusiasts or through the numerous gun shows and flea markets that proliferate across the Southwest. It's not always clear when or whether laws are being broken: grenade cannisters are

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POLO RALPH LAUREN
THE PANAMA BELT

legal until they are primed with explosives; today, conversion kits that make semi-automatic weapons into automatic ones are illegal, but those manufactured before May, 1986, and the individual parts from which a gun-smart user could create a conversion kit, are not. The winking relationship between gun owners and federal authorities charged with enforcing such vague laws insures that no one takes the laws very seriously.

Two other rationales were offered for the A.T.F raid, which took place on February 28th. One was that Koresh and his followers were manufacturing methamphetamines in a laboratory inside the compound. This rationale surfaced on March 27th, after the A.T.F. enlisted the Texas National Guard in its plans and then found that it needed a legal cover: under federal law, the Guard could participate only if there was evidence of illegal drugs. Yet at the same time the bureau was floating rumors of a meth lab it was admitting that it was not sure any such lab was in operation when the raid took place. The other rationale, which appeared in affadavits not released until after the final cataclysm, was that Koresh espoused "certain doctrines hostile to law enforcement and particularly the A.T.F."

The A.T.F., already imagining its press clippings, had announced the raid in advance to news people all over Texas. The agency chose a Sunday morning, reasoning that devout cultists would surely be in church. But the Branch Davidians, who are an offshoot of the Seventh Day Adventists, observe the Sabbath on Saturday. The invasion began with horse trailers full of agents approaching the compound as helicopters snarled overhead and reporters hid behind cows. Forty-five minutes later, four federal agents lay dead and sixteen had been wounded, and at least two cult members were dead and several others, including David Koresh, injured.

"I have you in my snare," Koresh boasted in a message to the F.B.I. six weeks after the shoot-out. No doubt the authorities viewed this statement as a sick joke, but it described exactly the scenario for which the Branch Davidians had been preparing. One can only imagine the sense of destiny that must have been felt inside the compound as the government began fulfilling Koresh's prophecy. Build it and they will come.

Meanwhile, in the brief sober interlude after the bodies were taken from the field, pledges of peaceful negotiations streamed from the offices of embarrassed officials, such as Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, who is in charge of the A.T.F., and a "senior F.B.I. official in Washington," who told the *Times* that the bureau was withholding the use of tear gas, because tear gas could prove lethal to infants in the compound.

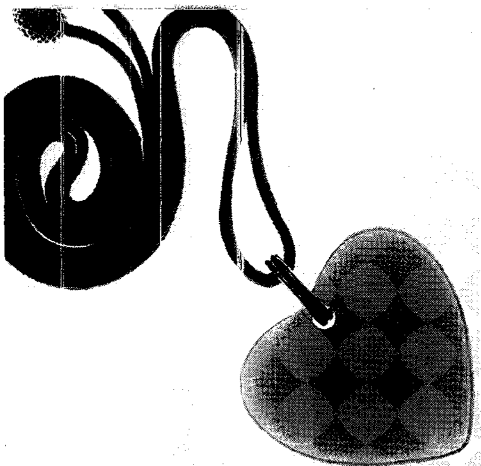
At this point, the humiliated federal agencies might have simply sat and waited. Instead, they obligingly set the stage for the showdown that the dramaturge Koresh had envisioned, bringing in tanks and armored vehicles, bathing the compound in floodlights, filling the country night with the chants of Tibetan monks and the recorded screams of rabbits being slaughtered. Concertina wire encircled the perimeter, as much to prevent fanatical believers from rushing inside to join the Davidians as to keep the cultists from escaping. It was Ranch Apocalypse indeed.

"I ***know*** *what I said ten minutes ago. That was the* ***old*** *me talking."*

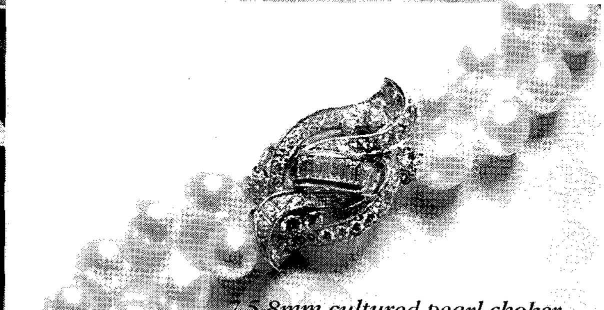
Federal officials stumbled around in a trance, grasping at reasons for their sleepwalk toward catastrophe. The F.B.I. grew increasingly irritable and impatient, as if the effects of all this psychological warfare were directed at it, and not at the resolute cultists inside. What caused the authorities to take "the next logical step," of breaking holes in the structure with a tanklike armored vehicle and pumping in tear gas? It was to save the children, Attorney General Janet Reno claimed later that day, explaining that she had been told that Koresh was "slapping babies around." The F.B.I.'s director, William Sessions, denied that there was any evidence of ongoing child abuse. His reason for gassing the compound was to encourage the stalled negotiations, he said. The assistant director of the bureau's criminal division offered a third reason: "These people had thumbed their noses at law enforcement."

"Law enforcement," it seems clear, did not know what it was dealing with. America is fertile ground for strange religious efflorescences. We tend to channel our most radical impulses through religious enthusiasms rather than through politics, philosophy, or art. In one sense, the Branch Davidians were a feature of the worldwide fundamentalist upsurge; but there were qualities that stamped the Koresh phenomenon as particularly American, among them its eclectic blending of beliefs and the presence of a free-lance messiah, in this case a rock'n'rolling polygamist. Our instinctive—and constitutional—tolerance for the varieties of religious belief and practice, combined with our unfettered adoration of the right to bear arms, is bound to produce dangerous cults, especially as families break down and the millennium draws near.

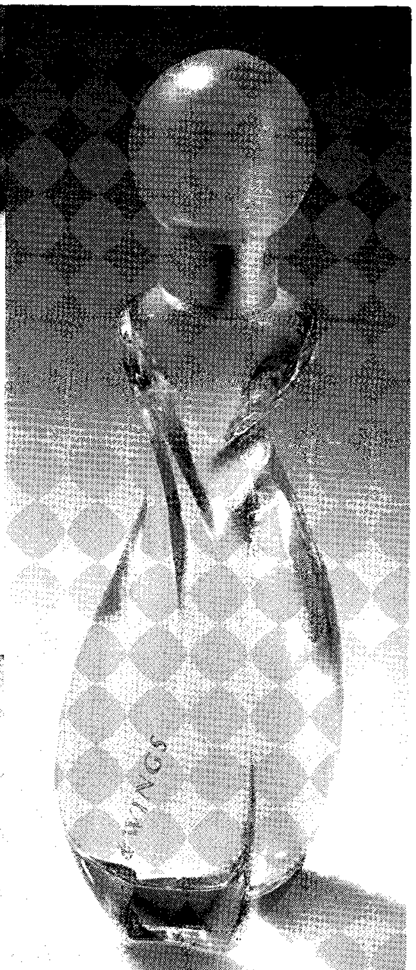
But the Branch Davidians were not Al-Jihad. They did not train themselves for an assault on society; they trained themselves to resist an assault by society. The pyre of bodies in Waco is not solely the product of a paranoid mind bent on self-destruction. It is also the result of a government that allowed itself to be duped and goaded into helping create the inferno that Koresh had prophetically called into being. ♦



Baccarat heart pendant on cord, $80



7.5-8mm cultured pearl choker with diamond clasp, $6200. Antique & Estate



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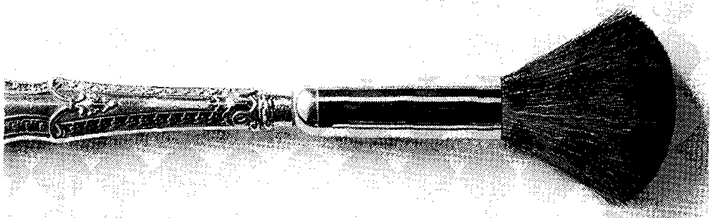
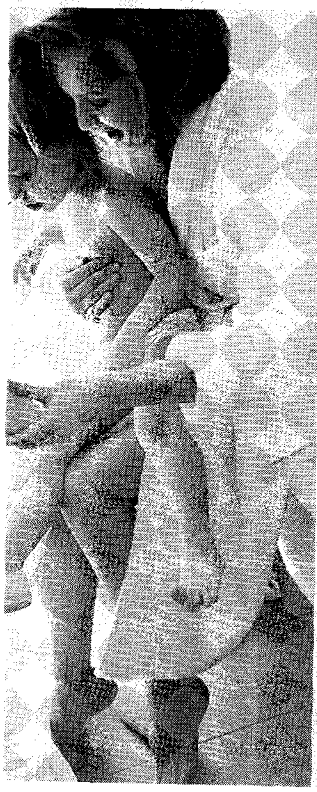
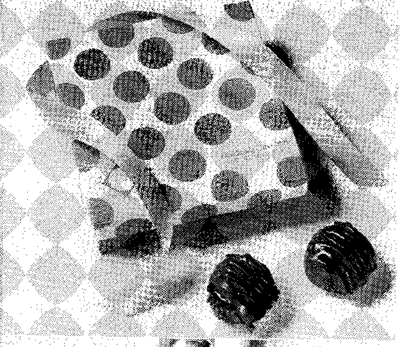


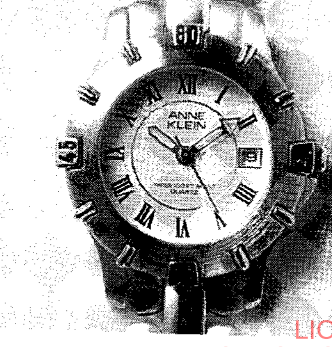
Sterling make-up brush, $75. Antique & Estate



Chocolate bon bons by Boca. 12-oz., $10.



Anne Klein sport watch, $150.



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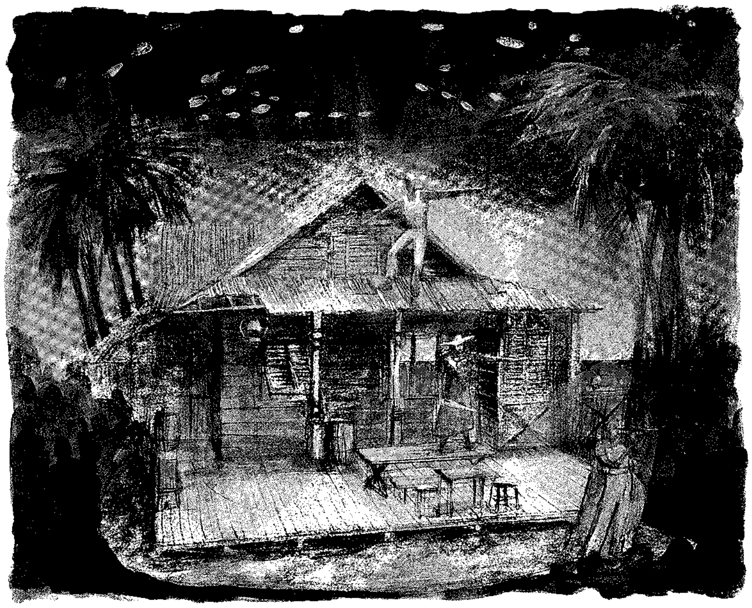

John Lee Beatty's original set design for "Playboy of the West Indies."

THE THEATRE

Bells Are Ringing

MAKERS of movies and Broadway musicals have been pillaging the gothic horror novel for decades, with unending attention paid to a few works of sprawling grotesquerie: "Frankenstein," "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The Phantom of the Opera," and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." At the moment, all four stories are in play. Kenneth Branagh plans to film the Mary Shelley classic soon; Tim Burton is mulling a modern movie gloss on the Stevenson tale; and "Phantom" continues to spawn progeny both legitimate and wayward.

The Victor Hugo novel, meanwhile, is being adapted on a less ostentatious scale: the Westbeth Theatre Center (151 Bank Street) will present a new musical called "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" through May 15. But for a production that is, technically, a showcase and that asks only fifteen dollars a ticket, there's a lot on offer. Bob Phillips has designed a gargantuan set, including twin towers and a gibbet and a pillory, where Quasimodo is whipped. Franne Lee's dark but not dreary costumes recall her Tony-winning work on "Sweeney Todd." And the pianist Byron Janis, who this year celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of his orchestral début, has composed his first theatrical score, which is written in a style evoking that other comprehensive nineteenth-century art form, opera.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

AND BABY MAKES SEVEN—Cherry Jones, Peter Frechette, and Mary Mara head the cast of a play by Paula Vogel. Presented by Circle Rep. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

ANGELS IN AMERICA—"Millennium Approaches," the first half of Tony Kushner's epic work, opens May 4 at 6. (Previews run through May 3.) "Perestroika," the second half, will open in October and will run in repertory with "Millennium Approaches." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

A DOLL HOUSE—The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre offers John R. Briggs' adaptation of the Ibsen play. Previews run through the May 1 matinée. Opens May 1 at 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660.)

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN—A musical by John Kander (score), Fred Ebb (lyrics), and Terrence McNally (book), which was directed by Harold Prince. It is based on the 1976 Manuel Puig novel. The twenty-one-member cast stars Chita Rivera, Brent Carver, and Anthony Crivello. Previews through May 1. Opens May 3 at 6:30. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LATER LIFE—In A. R. Gurney's new play, a man and woman who haven't seen each other in thirty years meet up again. Previews begin April 30. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

LINDA—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company's new show, by Everett Quinton and Mark Bennett, is billed as "a new country musical." Previews through May 1. Opens May 2 at 7. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

LYPSINKA! A DAY IN THE LIFE—John Epperson brings his fabulous lip-synching alter ego to Off Broadway. This show was seen last season at New York Theatre Workshop. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY—After a two-season hiatus, the troupe returns with **LAST NIGHT AT ACE HIGH**, a play by Kenneth Franklin Hoke-Witherspoon. Previews begin April 30. (LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, LaGuardia Community College, Queens. 1-718 482-5151.)

PLAYBOY OF THE WEST INDIES—Mustapha Matura's 1984 adaptation of the J. M. Synge play. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

TANGO PASIÓN—A new dance musical, with a number of Argentine singers and dancers making their New York débuts. Sexteto Mayor, from "Tango Argentino," is the orchestra. Choreography is by Hector Zaraspe. Opens April 28 at 6:45. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

TIME ON FIRE—Actor Evan Handler's comic account of his successful fight against leukemia. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

WILD MEN!—George Wendt, of "Cheers" fame, stars in a musical comedy by Peter Burns, Mark Nutter, Tom Wolfe, and Rob Riley. In previews. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AIN'T BROADWAY GRAND—Mike Burstyn portrays Mike Todd in this musical comedy. The score is by Mitch Leigh, the book is by Thomas Meehan and Lee Adams, and the lyrics are by Mr. Adams. Directed by Scott Harris. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

ANOTHER TIME—Ronald Harwood's family drama presents a Jewish piano prodigy, at fifteen (in South Africa) and fifty-one (in London). The cast members—Malcolm McDowell (in a dual role as the young musician's father and as the musician himself in middle age), Joan Copeland, Marian Seldes, Michael Lombard, and James Waterston (as the teen-age prodigy)—are terrific, and occasionally manage to transform material that is hobbled by hackneyed language and cumbersome staging into something worth watching. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes May 9.)

BACK TO BACHARACH AND DAVID—A fizzy, perfectly pitched new musical revue devoted to the songs Burt Bacharach and Hal David wrote in their prime. The singers are Melinda Gilb, Steve Gunderson, Sue Mosher, and Lillias White. Kathy Najimy directed. (Club 53, at the New York Hilton, Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. 261-5853.)

BLOOD BROTHERS—Willy Russell's long-running London musical has crossed the Atlantic. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CANDIDA—The setting by David Jenkins, as lighted by Peter Kaczorowski, has great distinction, which is all that can be said for this production of Shaw's play. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/5/93.) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes May 2.)

FOOL MOON—Bill Irwin and David Shiner are the inspired clowns in a show that is perfection itself. The only sound you'll hear is the merry music of the Red Clay Ramblers and the abundant laughter of the audience. (3/8/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

THE GOODBYE GIRL—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short, two brilliant, funny stars, transform this otherwise indifferent musical adaptation of Neil Simon's movie into a sporadically festive evening. The dances by Graciela Daniele are more than helpful, as is the comic support by John Christopher Jones. Score by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by David Zippel. Michael Kidd directed. (3/15/93) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME—A musical by Byron Janis (score), Hal Hackady (lyrics), and Anthony Scully (book). (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Closes May 15.)

JEFFREY—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

JENNY KEEPS TALKING—In Richard Greenberg's one-woman show, Leslie Ayvazian plays, in succession, two sisters and their grandmother. Ms. Ayvazian does well in Act I, in which Jenny, a New York tabloid columnist, gets fired and copes by moving to a small town. But in Act II, playing the other sister and the grandmother, she lectures rather than acts, which leads one to believe that Mr. Greenberg, although he is funny from time to time, has almost nothing interesting to say about women, work, families, or love. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes May 2.)

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Memory Tricks—In her droll, bittersweet one-woman show, Marga Gomez takes an hour and ten minutes to tell us about Latino life in Washington Heights, and especially about her mother, a former dancer known locally as Margo the Exotic. (4/26/93) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes May 2.)

Oleanna—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other topics in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. The play's skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. Treat Williams and Mary McCann make up the cast. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

One Shoe Off—A new play by Tina Howe. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes May 2.)

Owners and **Traps**—A pair of plays by Caryl Churchill that were written in the seventies, pre-"Cloud Nine." The first one is about a rapacious real estate dealer and her victims; the second is about two communes, one in the country, the other in a city, where an assortment of characters, living and dead, somehow manage to make do. The fierce, ironic sensibility of Ms. Churchill in both instances deftly adapts to comedy. The acting is fine throughout, especially that of J. Smith-Cameron, Robert Stanton, and Tim Hopper. Derek McLane designed the distinguished settings. The plays are performed in repertory. (4/19/93) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

Pretty Fire—Charlayne Woodard wrote and stars in this autobiographical one-woman show about being a black child in upstate New York in the sixties. Ms. Woodard is utterly believable in every role she's created, from her younger self to her grandmothers to a neighborhood fishmonger. Each word, incident, and gesture is well chosen, and the evening is a treat from beginning to end. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes April 29.)

Putting It Together—This celebration of Stephen Sondheim's music features Julie Andrews, Stephen Collins, Christopher Durang, Michael Rupert, and Rachel York. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Redwood Curtain—Vietnamese orphan piano prodigy meets Vietnam vet in woods. Good is not the word. Marshall W. Mason directed Lanford Wilson's play. With Jeff Daniels and Sung Yun Cho. (4/12/93) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Shakespeare for My Father—Lynn Redgrave's show about her relationship with her pater, the actor Michael Redgrave. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me—Michael York (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and Chuck Cooper (American) portray hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. Robin Lefèvre directed. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Song of Jacob Zulu—Ladysmith Black Mambazo, a nine-man a-cappella group from South Africa, serves as the chorus in this new play by Tug Yourgrau. Jacob, compellingly played by K. Todd Freeman, is a righteous Christian teen-ager who gives up the hope of immortality in the next world for revolutionary immortality in this one. Unfortunately, the first song broadcasts the outcome of Jacob's fate, so the audience spends the rest of the evening biding its time; the show only really acquires oxygen and size in its all too few scenes with Ladysmith Black Mambazo. (4/12/93) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Three Hotels—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, with Christine Lahti and Ron Rifkin. Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Three Men on a Horse—The National Actors Theatre's revival of a comedy by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Village Light Opera Group—Presenting **the new moon**, by Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein II. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. Closes May 2. For tickets, call 279-4200.)

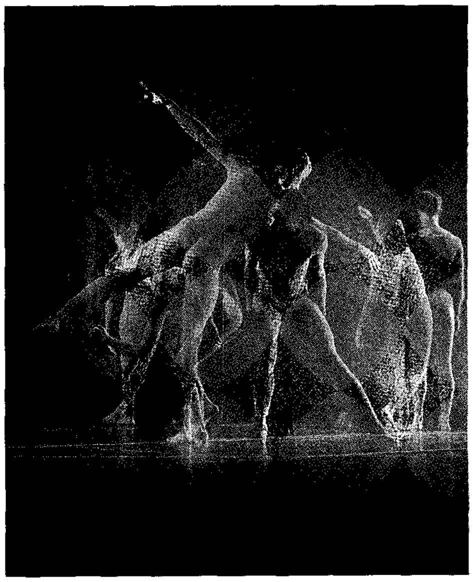
The Who's Tommy—The Pinball Wizard comes to Broadway. Pete Townshend and director Des McAnuff have adapted the classic rock opera for the stage. (Reviewed in this issue.) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Wilder, Wilder, Wilder—Three one-acters by the invaluable Thornton—"The Long Christmas Dinner," "Pullman Car Hiawatha," and, best of all, "The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden." The actors, though most of them are comparatively inexperienced, do a very good job, so the real star of the occasion is Edward Berkeley, the director. (12/21/92) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Wrong Turn at Lungfish—The play owes more to day-in, day-out television than it does to the theatre. Tony Danza, making his New York stage début, deserves a better part under happier circumstances. (3/8/93) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

LONG RUNS

beau jest: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **blue man group/tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **crazy for you:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **falsettos:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **the fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **five guys named moe:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **forever plaid:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **guys and dolls:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **jelly's last jam:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **les misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **miss saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **the night larry kramer kissed me:** Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038. . . . **nunsense:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **the phantom of the opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **tony n' tina's wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **the will rogers follies:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.



Trisha Brown Dance Company at City Center.

MARK HANAUER / COURTESY TRISHA BROWN CO.

DANCE

Vets

Maria Benitez winds up her New York season at the Joyce this week in a program that features "El Muro," a New York première for the Maria Benitez Teatro Flamenco. The choreography is by Ms. Benitez's longtime mentor, Ciro, who has flown in from Spain for rehearsals.

Also this week, Trisha Brown opens her season at City Center—her first New York season in two years—with programming that includes four premières and a guest appearance by the French group Compagnie Bagouet, for whom she has choreographed "One Story as in falling"—her first dance for a company other than her own.

Ms. Benitez is a flamenco artist; Ms. Brown is a leading innovator in modern dance. Yet they share this: after twenty years, each is still performing in her own repertory. In separate conversations, Ms. Benitez and Ms. Brown discussed this experience.

Ms. Benitez jumped right in. "Many Spanish dancers are into fast feet," she said. "But, if someone has fast feet, there's always someone else who has faster feet. The core thing is knowing where the center is—that the extremities are extensions of it."

Ms. Brown responded: "I have this seasoned, reasoned body now. I actually weigh less than I did twenty years ago. When I perform today, there is nothing else in my mind but what I'm doing. I used to ride my physical abilities. Now I direct them."

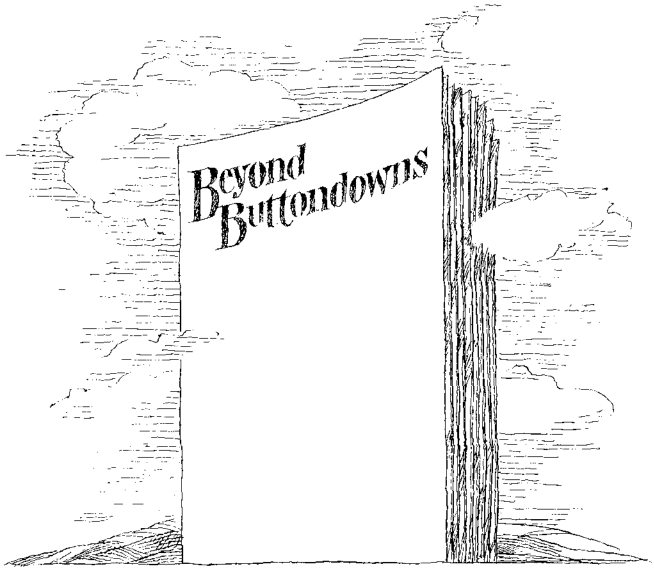
New York City Ballet—April 28-30 at 8, May 1 at 2 and 8, and May 2 at 1 and 7: "The Sleeping Beauty." The season then continues with the Balanchine Celebration (from May 4 through June 27). (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

American Ballet Theatre—The spring season opens with "The Sleeping Beauty." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. May 3-4 at 8. The season continues through June 12.)

Mark Morris Dance Group—With members of the White Oak Dance Project, in "Dances to American Music": "Home" (première), "Mosaic and United" (première), "Grand Duo" (New York première), and "Three Preludes" (which will be danced on alternate evenings by Mr. Morris and Mikhail Baryshnikov). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. April 29-May 1 at 8, and May 2 at 2 and 7.)

Trisha Brown Dance Company—April 28 at 8: "Newark," "Opal Loop," and "For M.G.: The Movie" (New York première). . . . ¶ April 29 at 8: "Lateral Pass," "Another Story as in falling," and "Newark.". . . ¶ April 30 at 8: "Accumulation with Talking plus Watermotor," "Glacial Decoy," and "Astral Converted (50")." . . . ¶ May 1 at 8: "Another Story as in falling," "Newark," and "For M.G.: The Movie.". . . ¶ May 2 at 3: "Foray Forêt" and "Astral Converted (50")." . . . ¶ May 4 at 8: "Foray Forêt," "One Story as in falling" (New York première; with Compagnie Bagouet), and "Newark." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through May 9.)

Maria Benitez Teatro Flamenco—In "El Muro," plus traditional flamenco. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. April 28-May 1 at 8 and May 2 at 2 and 7:30.)



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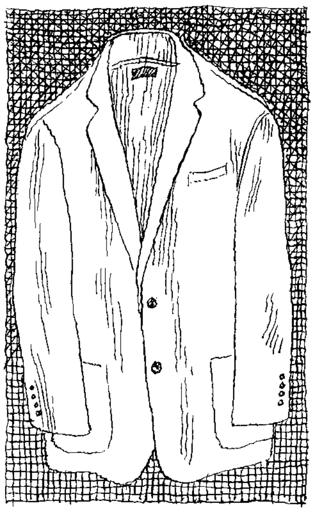

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NIGHT LIFE

No Regrets

BEFORE Ingrid Caven made her American début last spring at the Ballroom, the advance word from the European cabaret underground was that here, at last, was the true heir to Piaf and Dietrich. Such overheated praise, of course, is practically de rigueur for an important cabaret début. But Caven lived up to the publicity, and her 1992 engagement had to be extended. Now she's returning to the Ballroom to open a two-week appearance, beginning on April 27.

For once, the Piaf-Dietrich comparison seems credible. Other singers may borrow stylistic elements from those quintessential divas, but Caven's interpretations seem to rise authentically from her own creative wellspring. What's more, Caven—like the best of her predecessors—possesses mystery. Despite their frankness, neither Dietrich, with her sultry sensuality, nor Piaf, with her imploding defiance, exposed all of their secrets. Caven remains similarly impregnable. Overdaubed makeup and crimson hair lend an unsettling aspect to this *Kabarettistin* without age, and her self-deprecations temper her sassy toughness. Her voice tends by nature toward Dietrich's baritonal moan, sometimes growling, sometimes buzzing, sometimes groping about in a sort of Schoenbergian *Sprechgesang*. But then she'll suddenly sharpen the emotional edge with Piaf's tight intensity. She draws on their repertoire, too, though much of her material was custom-made by composer Peer Raben, to lyrics by the filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder, to whom Caven was briefly married.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

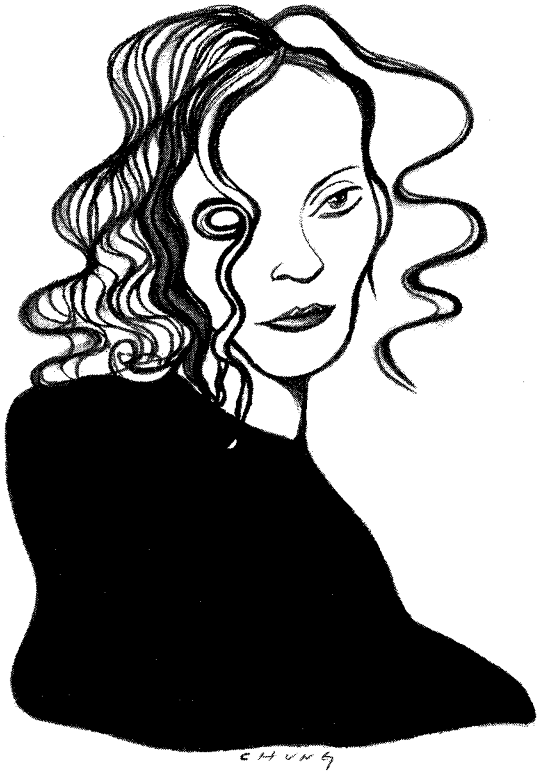
ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**TOVAH FELDSHUH** is currently at work in the Oak Room, with a show called "Tovah: Party of Ten." Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. **INGRID CAVEN** is here for two weeks.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. The **JOHNNY GRIFFIN** quartet and the **ROY HARGROVE** quintet will share a bill for a week. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A pleasant place to take in a show of folk or rock. **STEVE FORBERT** appears on April 30. This Meridian, Mississippi, folk-rock troubadour appeared on the New York scene in the late seventies and released four albums in quick succession. Then, after six long years without a new album, Forbert resurfaced in 1988 with "Streets of This Town," a strong collection of tuneful and wistful songs that are hopeful, but not mindlessly so. His next album was last year's "The American in Me," a thin, disappointing toss-off; it had none of the cheer, spirit, or sad truthfulness of his best work. Still, Little Stevie can always be counted on to offer a solid live show, and when he sings one of his full-bodied songs about love and longing and loss, his fans will have the pleasure of thinking to themselves, Yes. *Exactly.* **DAVID LINDLEY** will be in on May 1. **DARLENE LOVE** is here on April 28.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The art collection in this neighborhood restaurant, bar, and jazz club is a curator's worst nightmare. Fortunately, the musicians who gather round the Steinway each night are usually more harmonious. A trio with pianist **CHRIS ANDERSON,** drummer **BILLY HIGGINS,** and bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** winds up on May 1. **EDDIE HENDERSON, GEORGE CABLES,** and **DAVID WILLIAMS** take the stage for a week beginning May 3. Dining.



Ingrid Caven at the Ballroom.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **BOBBY SHORT,** who will grace the piano for the next month-and-a-half. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

CAROLINE'S, Broadway at 49th St. (757-4100)—Smack in the middle of tourist heaven or hell (depending on your view), Caroline's draws both local denizens and dazed refugees from the gawking hordes. They sit amid comedy junkies who are primed for the concert-length solos that are this soigné club's specialty. The current headliners, **MARGARET SMITH** (April 27-29) and **ALLAN HAVEY** (April 30-May 2) have dark, bent imaginations, but their candor is so free that their anxiety becomes exuberance. Deadpan Smith hails from a world of angry men. Her Uncle Swanee had his tombstone inscribed "What are *you* lookin' at?" Having survived family mayhem, she's bruised, pissed off—"I wore a neck brace for a year. I wasn't in an accident or nothin', I just got tired of holding my head up." Havey riffs on "sympathy sex" with his ex-girlfriend; neither has found anyone else. He offers something rare in comedy, a view of sex that is lubricious rather than prurient, and that's as juicy for women as for men.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. Evo Love is here on April 28, **ELEVENTH DREAM DAY** and **TACKLE BOX** on April 30, and Unsane on May 1.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—While barbirds stare at sports on the tube, one can often hear snatches of live folk and Irish music floating in from the back room. Jack Coen (wooden flute), Joanie Madden (flute and wooden whistle), and Mary Coogan (guitar) will be here on April 30.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—One of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. **QUEEN ESTHER MARROW** will be here with a trio through May 2. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

55 BAR, 55 Christopher St. (929-9883)—The narrow walls and low ceilings of this small basement establishment create an intimate atmosphere for the blues and jazz musicians who play here nightly. On most Mondays and Wednesdays, guitarist **MIKE STERN** comes in to lead a trio or quartet. Stern's hard-edged playing brings a modern blues sensibility to both standards and to his extended funk vamps.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—The latest entrant in the jazz-club sweepstakes. Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, the space is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room upstairs. **RAMSEY LEWIS** and **KENNY RANKIN** perform here through May 2. Dining.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—A jazz room, one steep flight up from the Upper West Side hurly-burly. The **VIRG DZURINKO** trio is here on May 2, and pianist **GEORGE ZISKIND** on May 3. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. While music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. **JAMES WILLIAMS** and **IRA COLEMAN** fill the bill April 28-May 1.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **REGGIE WORKMAN** is here on May 3.

LA CAVE ON FIRST, 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)—An Upper East Side bistro with a varied schedule. Blues singer **BOB GADDY** performs on Tuesday nights. Jahne Bell is in for a night on April 30. The Mike Berlin quartet will perform on May 1.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but lately a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. **ROOMFUL OF BLUES** is in on May 1. Speir Mor checks in on May 3. Dining.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. The schedule is as follows: the High Backed Chairs and Whale (April 29), Girl Trouble, the Devil Dogs, and Pop Defect (April 30), **SEBADOH,** Frances Gumm, and **CHIA PET** (May 1), and Rocket from the Crypt and Clawhammer (May 2).

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. **NANCY MARANO** and **EDDIE MONTEIRO** are in for an open-ended run. She sings and he accompanies with his voice and accordion—two voices intertwined with a sixty-four piece orchestra. There is no more lyrical, subtle, and exhilarating jazz-cabaret group than this New York duo. Closed Sundays.

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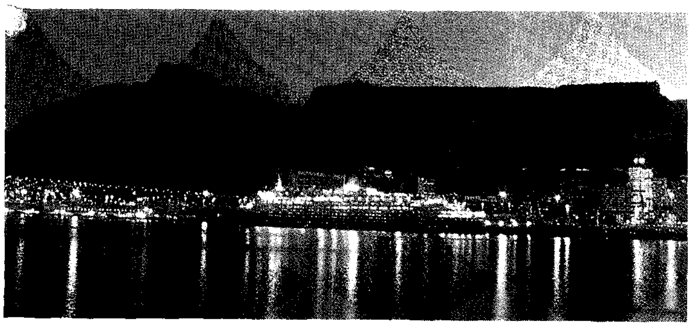

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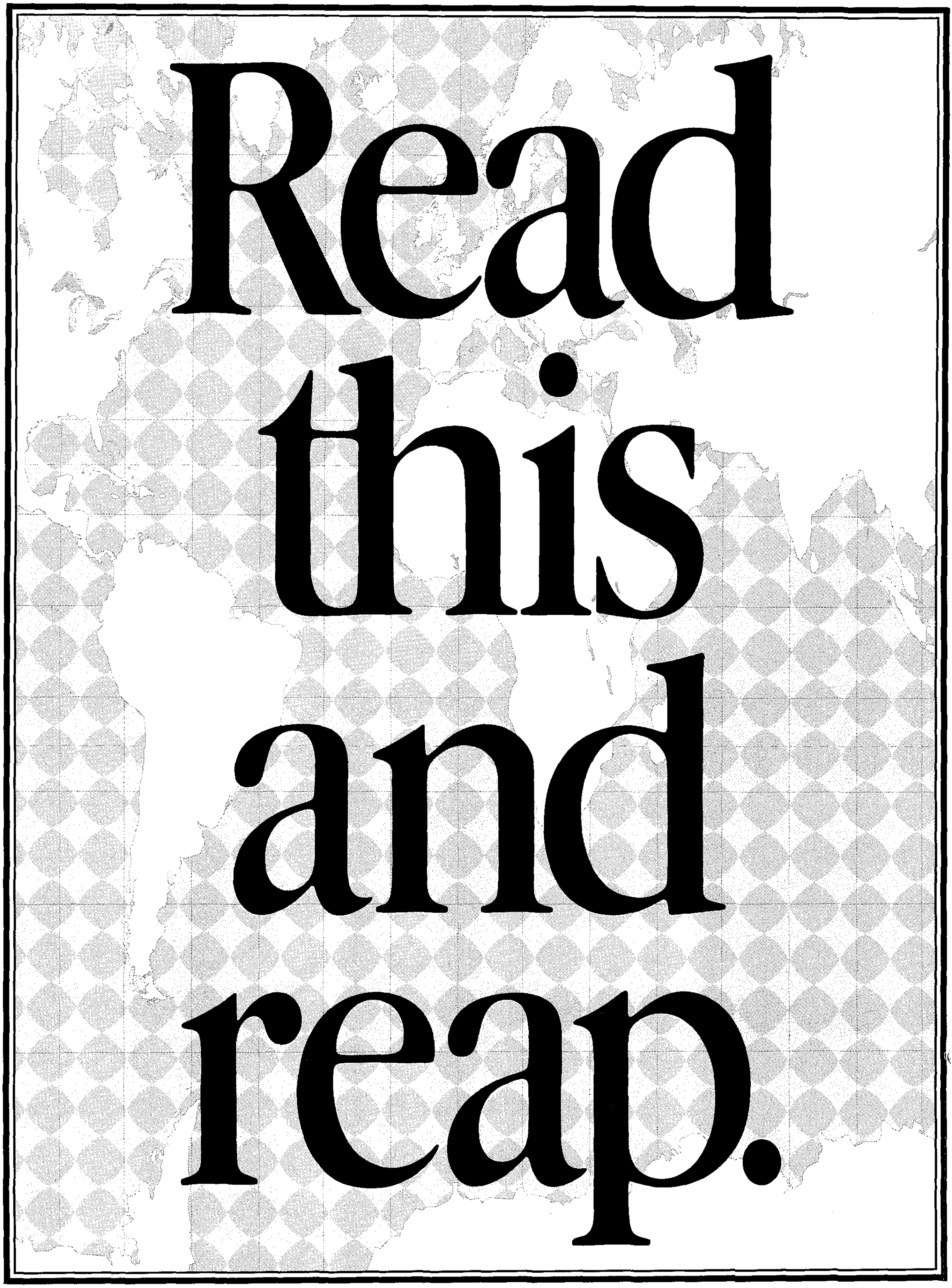
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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Intimate nineties glitter. **KAREN AKERS** is in the home-stretch of her monthlong run. Closed Mondays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—One of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs. The club features a broad stage, mobile-home-size speakers, plenty of room to shimmy, and, for the sedentary, a giant Big Brother video screen. Overkill, Fear Factory, Obituary, and Non-Fiction are here on April 30. **ACE FREHLEY** takes the stage on May 1.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. **PETER HOWARD** steps in on May 2. Dining.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to music that makes you feel like having a drink with a little umbrella in it. On April 28, **GIL SCOTT-HERON & AMNESIA EXPRESS** take the stage. If James Brown is rap's father figure, Scott-Heron is its older brother. In his seventies heyday, he was lean, mean, and lyrically clean: firing off sociopolitical diatribes in a deep, angry but always cool spoken voice, describing racism and the black predicament with barbed wit. (Public Enemy and the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy are unthinkable without him.) Scott-Heron is still a charismatic performer, and his astute commentary has remained pointed while becoming a little less dogmatic. His words are pitched over a rock-steady jazz and R. & B. groove, and he always has something new to say. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs, at this gilt-railinged, lamé-curtained club, is the Blue Room, a plush little nook with celestial wallpaper. The racket of midtown can't find you here. **ROSLYN KIND** is here through May 1.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—This brown-toned ski chalet of a club is a fine place to study jazz-group dynamics. The **TOMMY FLANAGAN** trio is here for a few weeks. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—In the heart of the heart of this legendary indoor-outdoor eatery is one of Manhattan's newer jazz spots, the Chestnut Room. **ILLINOIS JACQUET BIG BAND** is in for a week.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez, a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. **NORA YORK** will be here on April 28, with Rob Schwimmer, Rich Perry, and Dave Hofstra. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, the late Charles Mingus. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club. **KING SUNNY ADÉ AND HIS AFRICAN BEATS** will perform on April 29. A master exporter of Nigerian "high-life" music, Sunny Adé was making Afro-pop before "world music" existed as a category. For him, the goal of every concert is a dance party, and his sinuous, tinkly guitars and propulsive talking drums will take you there. **SOLOMON BURKE** is in on April 30-May 1, with the **UPTOWN HORNS. LITTLE MILTON** will open.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The holiest of jazz shrines. **BOBBY WATSON** is here through May 2. First with his quintet, Horizon, and starting April 30 with his seventeen-piece Tailor Made band. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **JOE TEMPERLEY** (saxophone), **JUNIOR MANCE** (piano), and **PAUL WEST** (bass) are here through May 1.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

A TALE from the frontiers of dating: Two young men we'll call Tim and Dan are supporters of New York Forward Action, a small but spirited AIDS fund-raising organization that maintains a loyal constituency—the kind of articulate, affable, I-can't-believe-you're-still-not-married charming guys whom other people never think of as getting sick and dying. Tim and Dan are both HIV-positive. As they watched the spectacular sunset over the Hudson at a recent NYFA event, they traded stories about the personal ads they had answered in a newsletter called *The Body Positive*. When Tim remarked on the intriguing self-promotion of a young blond man in his thirties who loved to read and bike and could stay at home without thinking he was missing something, Dan replied that he, too, had seen the ad and responded.

Just as each was about to ask if the other had received a reply, a friend—let's call him Nick—walked over and asked what they were talking about. Nick then said that he had himself recently placed an ad in the paper. Simultaneously, Dan and Tim realized that they had both responded to Nick's compelling self-description. Dan thought it was very funny. Tim was mortified. Nick told Tim that his letter was very heartfelt and sensitive. Tim still looked as if he'd been caught stealing from the charity's kitty. He lamely excused himself and fled. Nick called him the next day and asked for a date.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus—A great big gaudy spectacular, featuring such incongruities as baboons in tutus, hoop-jumping buffalo, and a leashed mountain lion riding a pony. (Madison Square Garden. Through May 2. For information about show times and tickets, call 465-6741.)

Cirque du Soleil—Among its many charms, the new show, "Saltimbanco," has lots of choreographed elegance and a couple of very sexy sibling acts—trapeze artists Karyne and Sarah Steben and strong men Marco and Paulo Lorador. (The blue-and-yellow tent at Battery Park City. For information about show times and tickets, call 809-6969.)

"Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!"—Penny Arcade presides over a foxy gang of male and female erotic dancers and the most heterogeneous audiences this side of Jones Beach, and she tells her own coming-of-age story with bawdy humor and sisterly warmth. There's nudity and bad language—and that title, of course—but it's all dazzlingly benign. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Thursdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30.)

"Artists Respond: The 'New World' Question"—Performance works by Emilio Cruz, Joyce Scott, and Kaylynn Sullivan Two Trees. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 135th St. 650-7100. May 1 at 8 and May 2 at 3.)

1993 Tour of World Figure Skating Champions—Brian Boitano, Viktor Petrenko, Nancy Kerrigan, Jill Trenary, and others. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. May 2 at 1.)

ART

Bodies of Evidence

"THE GREEK MIRACLE," the Met's tribute to the Periclean Age (through May 23), is organized around the idea that in about 550 B.C. the leading artisans of Greece began to move beyond the rigidity of Egyptian statuary toward a more rounded and singular kind of anatomical naturalism. This formal development is the miracle in question, and it is brilliantly illustrated at the very start of the show, as the expressionless face and stiff bearing of the first kouros (statue of a youth), dated 600-580 B.C., gives way to the animated smile and contoured shoulders of the second, from a few decades later. Further refinements are evident in the posture of the celebrated Kritios Boy and in the delicate accuracy of the blood vessels standing out in the forearm and foot of the horseman—and in the belly, shanks, and face of his horse—in the Athenian Cavalry relief from the Parthenon.

Unfortunately, the works must speak for themselves, because, by and large, the labels are filled with fluff. One would be tempted to call the curators lazy if it weren't for all the diplomatic ingenuity that undoubtedly went into obtaining these unprecedented loans from Greek institutions that have every right to consider the name Elgin a dirty word.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Daumier Drawings" is the first major exhibition devoted specifically to the drawings of Honoré Daumier (1808-79). Daumier was a working artist in the modern sense, a lithographer by trade and a savage pictorial satirist whose lampoons of King Louis Philippe once landed him in jail. The show contains more than a hundred of his caustic masterpieces, including "The Drunkenness of Silenus," "The Legislative Belly," and the saturnine "Doctor Prunelle." Through May 23. . . . ¶ "The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy, the Fifth Century B.C." Through May 23. . . . ¶ Paintings from fifteenth-century China, in "Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and Zhe School." Through May 2. . . . ¶ "Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection." More than four hundred and fifty works—Islamic pottery, Tiffany Favrile glass, Manets, Monets, Degases, et cetera—from the Havemeyer family's modest agglomeration. . . . ¶ "The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century" features rare prints from 1839 to 1939. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute's first show, "Infra-Apparel," puts into perspective the phenomenon—not at all confined to the present day—of underwear worn as outerwear. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism" comprises two hundred and thirty paintings, relief sculptures, collages, drawings, and prints. Through May 2. . . . ¶ "Thinking Is Form: The Drawings of Joseph Beuys." Through May 2. . . . ¶ "Thresholds/Santiago Calatrava: Structure and Expression." More Calatrava's projects documented here are viaducts, bridges, and railway stations realized through-

ART SPIEGELMAN

out Europe; the Spanish pavilion from last year's World's Fair, in Seville; and the model for a "biospheric" addition to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Through May 18. . . . ¶ Photomontages by Dadaist John Heartfield and photographs by Philip-Lorca diCorcia. . . . ¶ "Projects: Readymade Identities." Suzan Etkin's "Dryclean V" is a very witty piece. It consists of a mechanized drycleaner's rack, filled with bright-colored women's clothes, whirling around at what must be its highest setting. At intervals, it suddenly stops moving, and we realize that the clothes, all made of obviously synthetic materials, are fake—two-dimensional cutouts, which nobody is skinny enough to wear. Then, just as suddenly, it whizzes into motion again with its pointless purposefulness. Through May 18. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Picasso and the Age of Iron." A breathtaking installation of some of this century's most engaging sculpture. The exhibition is based on the idea that Picasso's introduction of the ancient yet modern material iron into the artistic language, shortly after the First World War, was a subversive political gesture. The show also includes work by Alexander Calder, Julio González, Alberto Giacometti, and David Smith. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Photography in Contemporary German Art: 1960 to the Present." Through May 9. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 10.)

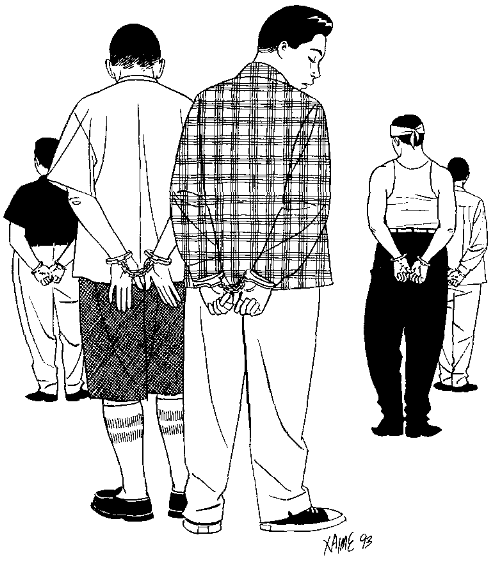
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—This Biennial features the work of more than eighty American artists, with much of the material evincing a concern for sociopolitical issues. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Manet to Picasso" is a choice show of approximately forty works on paper, dating from 1871 to 1937 and all drawn from the museum's collection. Through May 23. . . . ¶ Women's age-old passion for stylish shoes is the subject of "Fancy Feet: A Historic Collection of Ladies' Footwear." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Glass Installations" is a revelation of how far the use of this material has advanced since the early sixties, when the development of small, inexpensive glass furnaces made it possible for artists and university students to explore the possibilities of glass. In those days, artisans concentrated on technical mastery of a difficult medium. Here, six contemporary practitioners reflect the graduation to more mature concerns. Nowhere is this more evident than in William Morris's "Cache," a sort of dry riverbed made of tusks and littered with bones and skulls—thirty-six feet long (all in *glass*, remember) and running diagonally across a darkened gallery. It is hauntingly austere and speaks volumes about the fragility of the environment. The remaining site-specific installations include Steve Tobin's glass waterfall, Bruce Chao's walk-in structure, made of old windows enclosing a palm tree, and works by Michael Aschenbrenner, Carmen Spera, and Mary Shaffer. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200." (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-85" The murals of the Mexican artists Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros are among the most successful works of revolutionary art of this century. The work in this show makes it seem as if most contemporary Mexican-American artists are very much in the shadow of these three men. The art is rooted in the civil-rights movement of one of the United States' most exploited labor forces, and this ambitious exhibit of more than ninety artists features several who manage to be both political and inventive: Luis Jimenez, with his polyester sculptures of helmeted heads supported by gas-mask bases; Yolanda M. López, whose "Portrait of the Artist as the Virgin of Guadalupe," painted in visionary colors and posed like Liberty leading the people, has a sassy balance of humor and vigilance; and Celia Muñoz, who uses the photo-and-text form of John Baldessarian's Conceptual art to ironically convey the confusion of being educated in an alien culture. A moment of relief from ideology is offered by Eduardo Carrillo, whose painting of a snake on a kitchen table manages to bring Magic Realism to the canvas in a penetrating and characteristically modest way. The most impressive works are the community murals, which appear here in slide form. Their strength is a matter not so much of content as of sheer scale—their size enhances their ability to provide a dynamic self-image to whole disenfranchised communities. Through May 2. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)



"Chicano Art" at the Bronx Museum.

JAIME HERNANDEZ

CHINA INSTITUTE, 125 E. 65th St.—"Discarding the Brush: Gao Qipei and the Art of Finger Painting in Eighteenth-Century China." Finger painting, by Western standards, tends to conjure work displayed on refrigerators, but in Qing-dynasty China it was a traditional craft whose masters produced subtle figures and delicate landscapes. Gao Qipei, who often finger-painted nonstop for twelve hours, used his nails for fine detail. As they grew slowly blunter, he made broad strokes and shadows. His "Zhong Kui, The Demon Queller" (1728), a caped, forbidding giant with billowing whiskers, suggests the comparative depth of, say, a Degas pastel. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Thursday evening until 7.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Czech Cubism: Architecture and Design." That the aesthetic that governed the whole range of the Czech Cubists' design activities was a unified one is proved by three Jiří Kroha drawings, all from 1917, mounted together in a single frame. With a few wide strokes of red chalk, yellow-green pastel, and charcoal, respectively, Kroha gave fun-

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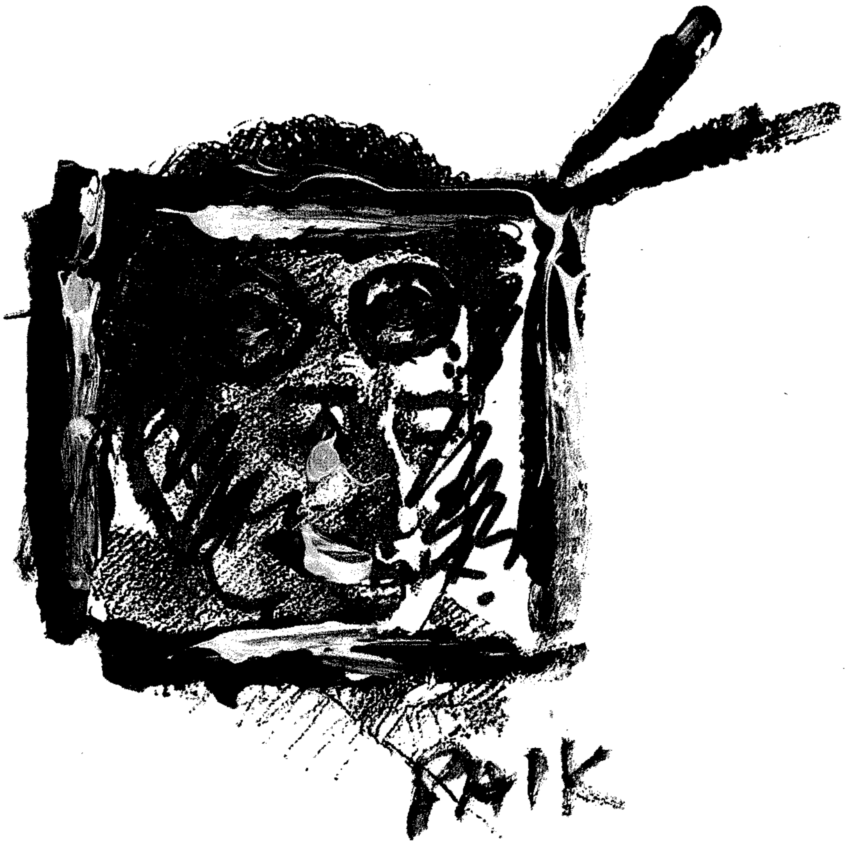

Self-portrait by Nam June Paik.

damentally similar form to a cabinet, a house, and a design for a seaside spa. Likewise, thoroughgoing Cubist assumptions enabled Josef Štěpánek to blend historically disparate architectural styles into a plausible whole. His "Façade Study" (1919) borrows, as it were, Tuscan columns, Romanesque arches, Gothic statuary niches, and Functionalist office-building windows and combines them in a way that cancels his debts through the sheer surplus value of his inspiration. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Rain and Snow: The Umbrella in Japanese Art." This exhibition showcases the popular motif of the umbrella, in more than a hundred objects, including paintings, wood-block prints, textiles, and ceramics. Opens April 28. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"A Great Legacy: Morgan Collections, 1913-43" presents J. P. Morgan, Jr.,'s acquisitions, including Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts; Gutenberg and Caxton incunabula; autograph letters by Austen, Locke, and Balzac; Rembrandt prints; and much more. . . . ¶ "The Observant Eye" celebrates the sesquicentennial of homeboy Henry James's birth with an exhibition of manuscripts, letters, and first editions. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals." This inaugural exhibit showcases more than a hundred masks, figures, textiles, and architectural pieces, all from traditional sub-Saharan societies. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Assault on the Arts: Culture and Politics in Nazi Germany." Through May 28. . . . ¶ Not content to leave women's clothing to the Met or MOMA, the library presents "Femininity, Fashion, and Feminism," which furthers the heady exploration of coded messages implicit in apparel. . . . ¶ "Christian Boltanski: Books, Prints, Printed Matter, Ephemera." Through May 15. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—Ten works by Keith Haring: eight drawings, one sculpture, and a sixty-foot mural. . . . ¶ Twelve large photo prints and four installation works by photographer Barbara Ess. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Kevin Larmon—Murky, heavily encrusted paintings depicting black fields. According to a gallery note, they are made of "rabbit skin glue with herbs and red cabbage on jute, pages from pornography and art history books, oil, Grumbacher painting medium number III, cobalt drier, axle grease, chain lube, dust and other road side occurrences." By putting so much into what ends up looking like so little, perhaps the artist is critiquing the obscurity of the language of art. But works like these long ago lost the power to meaningfully address this issue, and one can only wonder if something else was intended. Through May 1. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Nam June Paik—After a ten-year experiment in uptown living, the Holly Solomon gallery is back in SoHo with a bang. The inaugural show in the new space is the video work that Paik will exhibit this summer at the Venice Biennale. It's a very strong piece—an event, really—comprising many projectors arrayed on a wheeled scaffold in the center of the cavernous gallery, flashing images across the walls and ceiling. The dominant one is a kaleidoscopic display of tropical fish, but it is interspersed with classics of avant-garde video, from a lecture by Joseph Beuys to a variation on a theme of Manet's—a Playboy Bunny lying nude, Olympia-like, on an American flag. The soundtrack includes disco music, horror-film heavy breathing, and the voice of Dick Cavett. Elsewhere, there are lots of smaller works, including a tiny TV in a heart-shaped birdcage, a player piano heaped with more TVs, and an egg surrounded by state-of-the-art video equipment. Through May 8. (Holly Solomon 172 Mercer St.)

"Urban Analysis"—Attempting to sum up the current moment among younger artists in New York, this show employs the same dubious technique as the "I Am the Enunciator" show recently held at the Thread Waxing Space: crowding art works so close together that the effect is to suggest a kind of art-quilt. Amidst the visual din, some of the quieter work stands out, such as John Drury's "Home," a tiny replica of a house, not more than two inches high, topped with a plume of white cotton that billows from the little chimney all the way to the ceiling, and Lucky de Bellevue's cascading yellow-orange pipe-cleaner construction, "Golden Shower." Janine Antoni's work can be found on the lips of the gallery staff, who alternate wearing one of three shades of lipstick, "Janine of New York," "Viewer's Red," and "Post Human." Through May 15. (Braathen, 33 Bleecker St.)

Short List—**ILAN AVERBUCH:** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Through May 17. . . . **JOHN BEERMAN:** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **MIRIAM BEERMAN:** Klarfeld Perry, 472 Broome St. Through May 8. . . . **DANIEL BUREN** and **NANCY HOLT:** Weber, 142 Greene St. Through May 22. . . . **CARMEN CICERO:** Kelly, 591 Broadway. Through May 4. . . . **MANNY FARBER:** Esman, 575 Broadway. Through May 15. . . . **KATHARINA FRITSCH:** Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Through June 22. . . . **TSIBI GEVA:** Nosei, 100 Prince St. Through May 15. . . . **FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES:** Rosen, 130 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **MARY HAMBLETON:** Auchincloss, 558 Broadway. Through May 19. . . . **MARY HEILMANN:** Hearn, 39 Wooster St. Through May 22. . . . **JENE HIGHSTEIN:** Klein, 594 Broadway. Through May 9. . . . **ALEX KATZ:** Rubenstein-Diacono, 130 Prince St. Through May 12. . . . **JOHN MILLER:** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Through May 8. . . . **JOHN MONTI** and **BILL WEISS:** Ledisflam, 584 Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **ODILON REDON:** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Through May 28. . . . **MIA WESTERLUND ROOSEN:** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway. Through May 8. . . . **GAEL STACK:** Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway. Through May 8.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Short List—**JACK BEAL:** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 12. . . . **NELL BLAINE:** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. Through May 1. . . . **FRITZ BULTMAN:** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. Through May 15. . . . **CHARLES BURCHFIELD:** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. Through May 15. . . . **MICHAEL BYRON:** Baron-Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 8. . . . **STUART DAVIS:** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through May 1. (Open Mondays). . . . **MARY FRANK:** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 28. . . . **NANCY GRAVES:** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Through May 6. . . . **GWEN JOHN:** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. Through May 28. . . . **JOHN KEANE** and **FRANCES HYNES:** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 21. . . . **ROBERT LA HOTAN:** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 1. . . . **JOAN MITCHELL:** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 8. . . . **JAN MÜLLER** and **BOB THOMPSON:** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. Through May 29. . . . **MACHA POYNDER:** La Boetie, 9 E. 82nd St. Through May 28. . . . **MATTHEW RADFORD:** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 15. . . . **GEORGE SEGAL:** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through May 15. (Open Mondays). . . . **PAVEL TCHELITCHEW:** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 29. . . . **DAISY YOUNGBLOOD:** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 8.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Airborne

Given the billions of pictures that have been taken since the invention of photography, it is sometimes hard to believe that there is anything left in the world to photograph. Even evanescent subjects, like clouds, have been caught by the camera so often that images of them are usually clichés. Yet photographers never cease to be attracted to clouds, perhaps because it is a part of the photographer's temperament to want to capture and bring stillness to unfixed, fleeting, and unstoppable forms. No one who has photographed clouds has left more of a mark than Alfred Stieglitz. His cloud pictures are so unforgettable and so invested with his identity that for anyone else to attempt to produce original cloudscapes requires real historical knowledge—and a lot of ambition.

Richard Misrach's cloud photographs (Mann, 42 East 76th Street; through June 5) show him to be a photographer with that kind of knowledge and reach. His large images are not nostalgic or derivative. The quality of their color, their aggressive scale, and the transition in mood from picture to picture make one know that these photographs are contemporary, which is part of their power. They prove that there are always new ways to see.

CECIL BEATON—Fashion photographs and contact prints that allow one to track brief intervals of Beaton's most famous sessions, shot by shot. There are sequences with Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor, Greta Garbo, and Pablo Picasso, among others. These views of the subjects reacting and improvising for Beaton capture something of the collaborative nature of celebrity photography, the element of mutual invention, which isn't acknowledged as much as it ought to be. Through May 1. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway.)

BRASSAÏ—An exquisite show of vintage prints, all of them taken in Paris, and some of them by now very famous, by this legend of black-and-white photography. Through May 1. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

SHORT LIST—**TINA BARNEY:** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through May 1. . . . **CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI:** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through May 15. . . . **JAMES CASEBERE:** Klein, 594 Broadway. Through May 29. . . . **WILLIAM CLAXTON:** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **WILLIAM CLIFT:** Equitable Gallery, 787 Seventh Ave., at 51st St. Through June 12. . . . **PHILIP-LORCA DI CORCIA:** Wooster Gardens, 40 Wooster St. Through May 15. . . . **NANCY GOLDRING:** Baum, 588 Broadway. Through May 1. . . . **DOROTHY NORMAN:** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.; through May 15. And International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.; through June 27. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8). . . . **JOYCE TENNESON:** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through May 15. . . . **PENELOPE UMBRICO:** Saul, 560 Broadway. Through May 1.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitian Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the New York Public Library, and the Queens Museum.)

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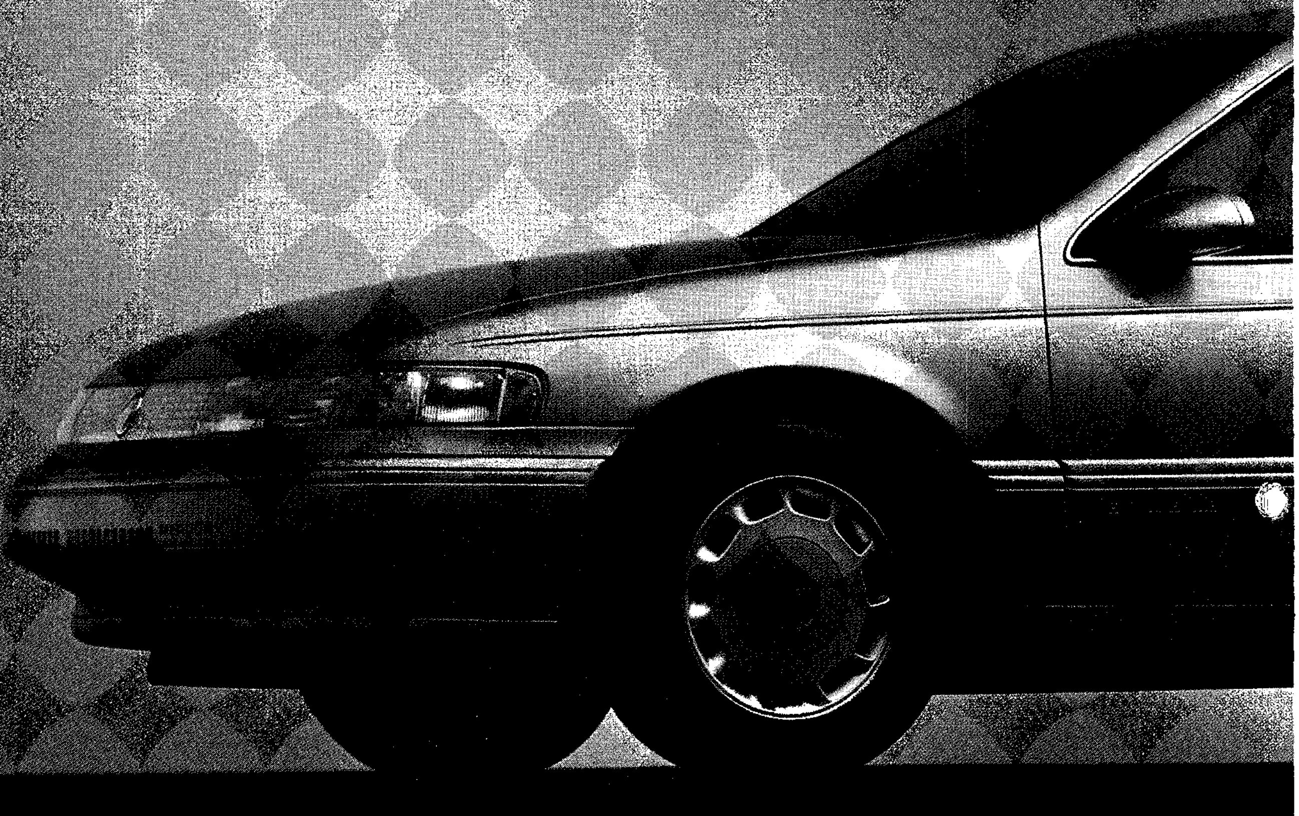

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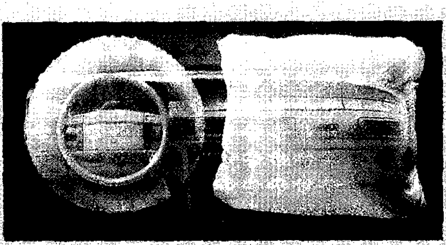

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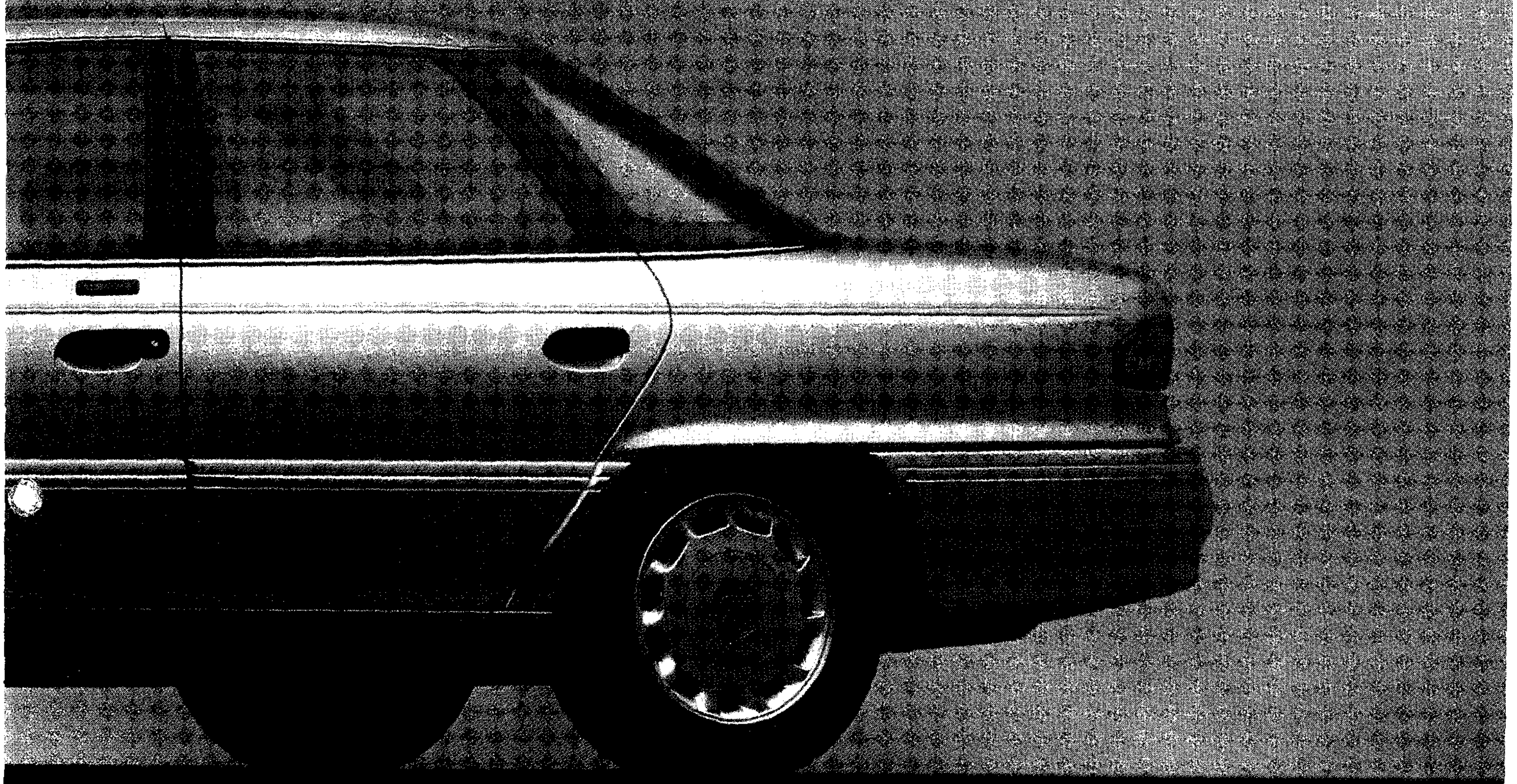

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MUSIC

New Leaf

THE Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center has been in turmoil for some time. During the long tenure of Charles Wadsworth as its artistic director, the group established chamber music as a midtown ticket-seller, and so almost did itself out of a job: the market for first-rate quartets and trios expanded far beyond the old faithful names like Budapest and Beaux Arts; ad-hoc celebrity combinations assembled for, say, the Brahms Sextets became a gala item; and with the passing of time the Society's concerts began to seem ordinary. Detractors called it (sometimes even in print) the Sight Reading Society of Lincoln Center, and when Mr. Wadsworth retired, a few seasons back, it seemed clear that either a step forward in polish and ensemble virtuosity or a strongly defined mission in terms of repertory was needed (preferably both). But the directorship of the cellist Fred Sherry, with his emphatic commitment to new music, seems not to have hit the spot with the society's subscribers. Now David Shifrin is in charge; it's too soon, perhaps, to characterize his plans for the group, but he is an absolutely superb clarinettist—secure, fanciful, imaginative. At the April 28 gala, he will be playing Schubert's "Shepherd on the Rock," which will also feature Sylvia McNair, who has been singing better than ever lately. Ms. McNair will also sing the soprano part in Schoenberg's Second String Quartet and venture into new territory with some Jerome Kern; André Previn will assist.

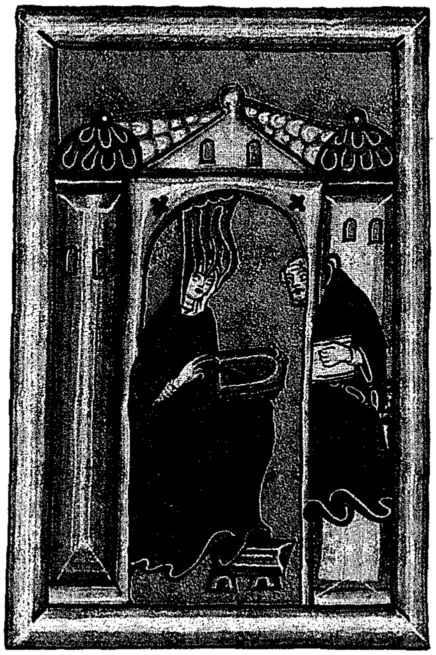
(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Final performances of the season. **LA TRAVIATA,** with Veronica Villarroel, Franco Farina, and Haijing Fu; conducted by Samuel Cristler. (April 28 at 8.). . . With Maria Spacagna as Violetta. (May 1 at noon.). . . **SIEGFRIED,** with Gwyneth Jones, William Johns, Heinz Zednik, Robert Hale, Hitomi Katagiri, Tom Fox, Matti Salminen, and Dawn Upshaw; James Levine. (April 29 at 6.). . . **GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG,** with Gwyneth Jones, Marie Plette, Hanna Schwarz, Wolfgang Schmidt, Alan Held, Tom Fox, and Matti Salminen; James Levine. (May 1 at 6.). . . **BENEFIT CONCERT,** with soprano Aprile Millo and tenor Luciano Pavarotti singing Verdi and Puccini; Michelangelo Veltri conducting the orchestra and chorus. (May 2 at 7.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

Cantonese Opera—Hong Hong—a stage name meaning Red Rainbow—will appear with her troupe in two Cantonese opera episodes: "The Trial in the Netherworld" (from the opera "The Suffering Spirit of Scarlet Plum Blossoms") and the climactic scene from "The Impeachment of Yen Sung." Also on the program is a brief martial-arts comedy. (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. April 29-May 1 at 7:30 and May 2 at 2.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Eve Queler directs Tchaikovsky's "Mazeppa," sung in Russian, and featuring soprano June Anderson, baritone Sergei Leiferkus, and bass Paul Plishka. (Carnegie Hall. May 2 at 8.)



Self-portrait by Hildegard von Bingen (see Vox Feminae).

COURTESY OF OTTO MÜLLER VERLAG

RECITALS

Berliner Saxophon Quartett—Playing a dozen works, all but two of which were written in 1992. (Weill Recital Hall. April 28 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—At Alice Tully Hall. April 28 at 8: Presenting Beethoven's Piano Trio (Op. 1, No. 3), Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 2, Schubert's "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen," and songs by Jerome Kern; with soprano Sylvia McNair, clarinettist David Shifrin, and pianist André Previn among the performers. A benefit concert. . . . ¶ April 30 at 8 and May 2 at 5: Beethoven's Clarinet Trio, Prokofiev's D-Major Violin Sonata, and Brahms' Piano Quintet; with pianist André Previn, violinists Young Uck Kim and Ani Kavafian, violist Paul Neubauer, and cellist Carter Brey.

Bargemusic—Pianist Emma Tahmizian performs Schumann's C-Major Fantasia "Carnaval" (Op.9); Nai-Yuan Hu joins her for Richard Rodney Bennet's "Five Pieces for Violin and Piano"; and cellist Christopher Costanza completes the ensemble for Ravel's Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 29 at 7:30 and May 2 at 4.)

Elizabeth Rich—Pianist, performing a "fantasy concert": Brahms' Fantasies (Op. 116), Beethoven's Sonata "quasi una fantasia" (Op. 27, No. 1), Haydn's C-Major Fantasy, Chopin's Polonaise-Fantaisie, and Schumann's C-Major Fantasy (Op. 17, a memorial to Beethoven, dedicated to Liszt). (Alice Tully Hall. April 29 at 8.)

Vox Feminae—The women's ensemble (drawn from the Cologne-based medieval-music group Sequentia) presents an evening of responsories, sequences, antiphons, and motets from the liturgical cycle "Symphoniae Harmoniae Caelestium Revelationum" ("Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations"), by the twelfth-century German abbess Hildegard von Bingen. An enormously talented aristocrat—her expertise extended beyond music and art to natural and medical science, diplomacy, theology, poetry, and what we might call metaphysics—Hildegard took the veil at the Benedictine Abbey at Disibodenberg and later founded a monastery on the Rupertsberg (near the Rhine-valley village of Bingen), where she spent the decade of the 1140s experiencing apocalyptic visions ("scivias," she called them), which provided the basis for the "Symphoniae." When she died at the ripe age of eighty-one, Hildegard left behind an oeuvre of some sixty such monophonic musical settings, which she viewed as sonic manifestations of the same harmony that ruled over the workings of the universe and the inner accords of the human body and soul. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. April 29 at 8.)

American Festival of Microtonal Music—At St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University. April 29 at 8: Music in unusual tunings, by Ben Johnston, Skip La Plante, Johnny Reinhard, Louis Babin, Benjamin Thorn, Michael Malone (employing a scale that divides the octave into seventy-two tones), and Mayumi Reinhard (an "onomatopoeiatic" Japanese women's trio). . . . ¶ April 30 at 8: Works by Partch, Cage, Ulrich Krieger, Mr. Reinhard, Gloria Coates (played on two guitars tuned a quarter-tone apart), and Jay Elfenbein, as well as some improvisations on novel instruments. (Enter at Broadway and 116th St. For information about tickets, call 517-3550.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—Presenting a potpourri of chamber works that includes a trio sonata by Telemann, Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet, and Milhaud's "Four Faces" for viola and piano. (Weill Recital Hall. April 30 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing trios by Mozart (in B-Flat, K. 502), Brahms (his Horn Trio, with French horn player David Jolley), and Beethoven (the "Ghost"). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 30-May 1 at 8.)

Julian Bream—The classical guitarist will perform works by Bach, Paganini, Granados, and de Falla, among others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 1 at 8.)

Rhea Jackson—Soprano, with pianist Halina Siedzieniewska-Alberth. (Alice Tully Hall. May 1 at 8.)

Fish, Family Style—Schubert's "Trout" Quintet, as played by four members of the Levine family—pianist Dena, violist Caroline, cellist Amy, and double-bass player Julius—with unrelated help from violinist Daniel Phillips (who, however, can often be heard performing with his own partially-familial Orion String Quartet). Also on the docket are Mozart's Trio in B-Flat (K. 502) and Brahms' C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. May 2 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

VineyardMusicke—This period-instrument ensemble's residence—a performing space within an office complex—occupies the site where, in the mid-nineteenth century, stood Irving Hall, a theatre and Democratic meeting hall—the chief rival, in fact, to neighboring Tammany Hall. (In 1888, Irving Hall relinquished its plot to Amberg's Theatre; Amberg's, in turn, was later renamed the Irving Place Theatre, which is how it was known when it was demolished to make way for Zeckendorf Towers, in 1985.) To celebrate the history of their particular spot of real estate, the members of VineyardMusicke—and, for this event, principally soprano Dana Hanchard—offer music that was performed in Irving Hall by Carlotta Patti, one of the mid-Victorian luminaries who appeared there. One of three singing sisters (the youngest of whom, Adelina, achieved operatic superstardom), Carlotta was forced by lameness to specialize in concert performances rather than stage work. (She did appear in opera for one season—in 1862—at the nearby Academy of Music, on 14th Street.) On the program: songs by Rossini, Schumann, and Gottschalk, plus instrumental pieces by Beethoven and Paganini. Carlotta's ghost should be pleased. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. May 2 at 3.)

Parthenia—A viol consort, plus countertenor Lawrence Lipnick, offering fantasias and consort songs by Byrd, Dowland, and Anthony Holborne. (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. 691-6263. May 2 at 4.)

New York Festival of Song—Performing recently composed American vocal works by Bolcom, Diamond, Daron Hagen, William Mayer, and others. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. May 2 at 5.)

New York New Music Ensemble—Presenting the New York premières of works by Jacob Druckman, Elizabeth Brown, and David Froom, in addition to Cage's "Six Melodies" and Martino's "A Set for Clarinet." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 3 at 8.)

David Ward—Pianist, performing works by Haydn, Mozart, and David Stoll (the American première of his Piano Sonata in B-Flat, from his series of "Reflections on Vedic Themes"). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 4 at 8.)

Kyler Brown—Organist, playing music by Bach (including his B-Minor Prelude and Fugue), Jehan Alain (his "Litanies"), Louis Nicolas Clérambault, Jean Langlais, and Michael McCabe, in addition to improvisations on submitted themes. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. May 4 at 8.)

Ute Lemper—The singing actress will sing in her act. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-9251. May 4 at 8. Through May 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Leonard Slatkin conducts the première of Michael Torke's "Run," Bartók's "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste," and Elgar's Violin Concerto (with Pinchas Zukerman). (Avery Fisher Hall. April 29 and May 1 at 8, April 30 at 2, and May 4 at 7:30.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Leonard Slatkin conducts Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis," Corigliano's Piano Concerto (featuring Stephen Gosling), and Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps." (Avery Fisher Hall. April 28 at 8.)

Boston Symphony—At Carnegie Hall, Seiji Ozawa conducting. April 28-29 at 8: Mahler's Symphony No. 3, with mezzo-soprano Birgitta Svendén, the Women of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and the American Boychoir. . . . ¶ April 30 at 8: Bernstein's Symphony No. 2 ("The Age of Anxiety," after a poem by Auden, with the solo-piano part here entrusted to Benjamin Pasternack) and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.

American Symphony Orchestra—Before the days of the phonograph, the only way you were likely to hear a composition on command (assuming you didn't employ musicians on your household staff) was by playing it yourself on the piano that occupied an obligatory niche in your parlor. This generated plenty of employment for transcribers capable of reducing orchestral scores to two staves that could be managed by a pianist—or to four staves for two pianists, since some scores were especially vast and since music-making was a highly social activity. Leading composers occasionally prepared their own transcriptions (or at least oversaw their preparation), wishing to avoid hack work by someone less capable; and, now and again, their transcriptions achieved beauties all their own. Leon Botstein offers here a long evening that will serve as an exercise in comparative listening. He'll lead the orchestra in Schoenberg's "Five Orchestral Pieces" (Op. 16) and Brahms' Symphony No. 4, and Misha and Cipa Dichter will perform two-piano arrangements of both—Schoenberg's as set by Webern, and Brahms' in his own reduction. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 30 at 7, with a lecture by Mr. Botstein to be delivered midway, after the first of two intermissions.)

Concert Royal—James Richman directs his chorus and period-instrument orchestra, plus soloists, in sacred music written for the chapel of Louis XIV; including *petits motets* by Lully, Couperin, and André Campra and *grands motets* by deLalande and Rameau (his "In Convertendo"). (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. April 30 at 8.)

AmorArtis Chorus and Orchestra—Johannes Somary directs Britten's "War Requiem," with the core ensemble supplemented by the Fairfield

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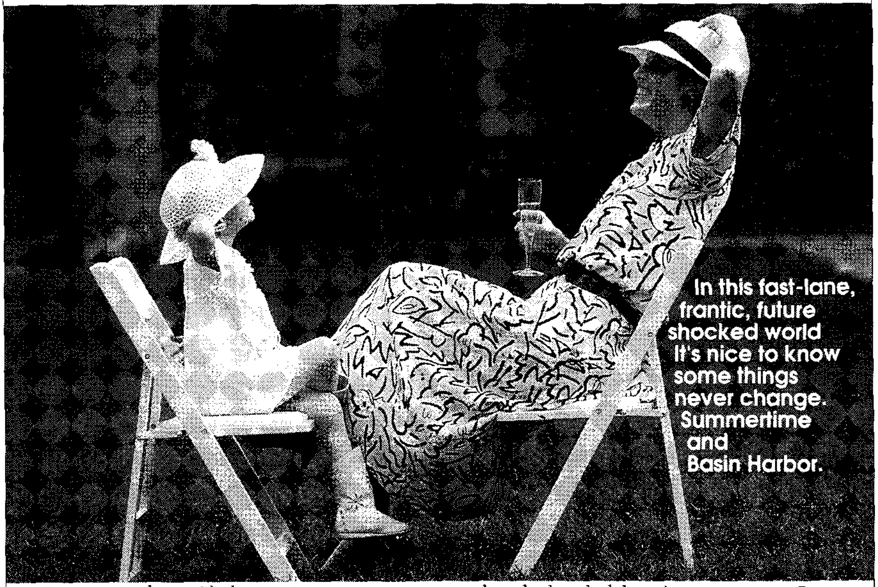
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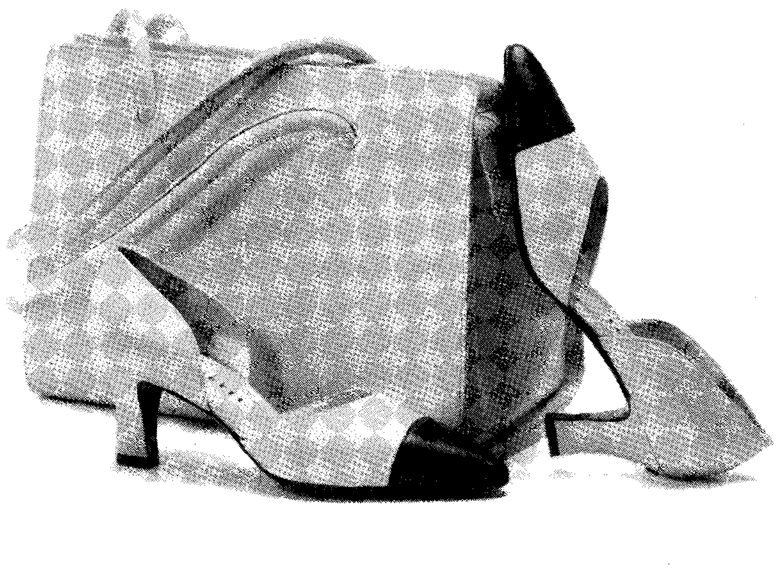

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County Chorale, Great Neck Choral Society, Hampshire College Chorus, and Newark Boys Chorus; with soloists Lorna Haywood (soprano), John Mac Master (tenor), and Brian Rayner Cook (bass), and with Rudolph Palmer assisting with the conducting. (Saint Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. May 1 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4513.)

Collegiate Chorale—Robert Bass directs Verdi's Requiem; with soloists Kallen Esperian (soprano), Sharon Graham (mezzo-soprano), Paul Lyon (tenor), and John Cheek (bass). (Carnegie Hall. May 1 at 8.)

Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra—Leif Segerstam conducts "Thus Saw Saint John," a 1984 "symphonic vision" by Poul Ruders, a stylistically eclectic Danish composer who resides in London's Tooting Bec mental hospital. (No, he's not a patient—but the room was available, and the rent was right.) Rounding out this Nordic program are Grieg's Piano Concerto (with Bella Davidovich) and Sibelius's Symphony No. 1. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 2 at 3.)

Chamber Choir of New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Dean X Johnson directs a program that includes works by Liszt, Berlioz, and Fauré; premières of works by three members of the choir; and pieces in a more popular vein. The Aspen Brass Quintet assists. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. May 2 at 3. For information about tickets, call 279-0228.)

Canterbury Choral Society—Charles Dodsley Walker directs Haydn's "The Seasons." (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 2 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Van Morrison—The Man has become a generally morose and prickly performer, except in one crucial regard: the joyful human saxophone that is his voice is still swinging hard and strong. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. April 28-29 at 8.)

Shawn Colvin—The advertisements for this tour include so many high-toned blurbs of critical praise that Colvin comes across more like a serious first novelist than like a literate folk-rocker in the Joni Mitchell mold. But this South Dakota-born singer is no snob, and her success is well earned. She spent most of the eighties struggling in New York folk clubs; then, in 1988, Columbia signed her and she took her big break and ran with it. Her second album, last year's "Fat City," is one of those albums you can listen to for months on end, continually discovering new favorite songs. The songs are edgy and restless self-explorations, but they have a kick and a lyrical daring that make them pleasurable and often moving. (Beacon Theatre. April 30 at 8.)

Patrick Street—This band has just released its lively fourth album, "All in Good Time." Kevin Burke plays the fiddle so smoothly, with such buoyancy, and with such relaxed showmanship that even a large concert hall becomes intimate. With Jackie Daly on accordion, Dáithí Sproule on guitar, and Andy Irvine handling vocals, mandolin, and bouzouki. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 1 at 8.)

Bill Frisell—This marvellous guitarist, who covers the stylistic waterfront with everything from jazz (Mingus, Sonny Rollins, and Don Byron) to classical (Copland and Ives) to pop (Dylan and Madonna), has composed new scores to accompany three classic Buster Keaton films. The congregation will be rolling in the aisles. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. May 1 at 8.)

Aretha Franklin—You better *think* about going to this show if you want to hear the preëminent soul-music instrument of our time. Aretha favors furs and glittering gowns and other Vegas trappings these days, and she sometimes seems as ambivalent about her great accomplishments as Al Green does about his. But count yourself lucky if you've ever experienced her voice taking flight and lifting the band, the audience, and the hall itself clear up to funky heaven. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 1-2 at 8.)

Shivkumar Sharma—With Rajan and Sajan Misra and others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 30 at 7:30.)

"Jazz for Young People" Concert—Wynton Marsalis, with his septet, plays and talks about New Orleans jazz. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 1 at 11 A.M. and 1 P.M.)

Wonder Boy and the Spiritual Voices—A Brooklyn-based gospel group with South Carolina roots. Also on the program is Valarie Jean Bailey who will talk about quilts. (Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza. May 1 at 1:30. No tickets necessary.)

Nina Simone and T. S. Monk—Beacon Theatre. May 1 at 8.

"For Miles and Miles"—A tribute to Mr. Davis, featuring Jimmy Heath, Gary Bartz, Ron Carter, Jimmy Cobb, Slide Hampton, Hank Jones, and Wallace Roney. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. May 1 at 8.)

"The Muddy Waters Legacy"—A salute to the Rolling Fork, Mississippi-born blues great, né McKinley Morganfield, who left this world on April 30, 1983. With Koko Taylor & Her Blues Machine and Junior Wells. Come and get your mojo workin'. (BAM's Majestic Theatre. May 2 at 3.)

Shawn Colvin at the Beacon.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Seattle Mariners, April 30 at 7:30 and May 1-2 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Oakland Athletics May 3-4 at 7:30.

CHAMPIONSHIPS —BASKETBALL AND HOCKEY

And the Winner Is—At press time, the Knicks were struggling with the Chicago Bulls for home-court advantage, while the Nets, presumably, are happy just to be contenders.

Islanders—Vs. the Washington Capitals, in first-round Patrick division action, April 28 at 7:30, if necessary.

Devils—Vs. the first-place Pittsburgh Penguins, April 28 at 7:30, if necessary.

(The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Yankees at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Down by the River—On May 1, starting at noon, twenty-two dance companies and performers will each contribute a number to a six-hour marathon. It will include traditional Japanese, Indian, and Ghanese groups as well as French hip-hop and modern dance. (South Street Seaport, Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. No tickets necessary.)

Enter Wills—Historian, journalist, and classicist Garry Wills will give a trio of talks on Shakespeare's "Macbeth." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571. May 4, May 11, and May 18, all at 6.)

Swing with the Ring—A four-hour dinner cruise around Manhattan harbor, sponsored by the Wagner Society of New York. The Valerie Capers trio will weave "Ring" motifs into its jazz arrangements. (Pier 81, Hudson River at 41st St. April 30 at 6. For more information, call 749-4561.)

Toons—New York University's Animation Festival will screen more than thirty student films. Techniques include claymation, computer animation, and the traditional cel method. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. April 30 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the films.)

Do It for Popeye—South Street Seaport will hold its annual sprucing-up-the-piers-and-scrubbing-the-decks volunteer day. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. For information about registration, which is required, call 669-9400. May 1, from 9 to 4.)

Singin' in the Rain Forest—Amazon Week IV, which gets started on May 3 at 6 with an opening ceremony at the United Nations, will include performances by the Arawak Mountain Singers and Roots of Brazil; two workshops, "Sustainable Alternatives for the Amazon" and "A Dialogue with the Insiders"; a screening of "Voices from the Rainforest"; and a rain-forest picnic. For more information, call 674-4646.

Brown Dance—A workshop, on May 1 from 10:45 to 12:30, will give participants a chance to dance in—or simply observe—the Trisha Brown style. (Park Central Hotel, Seventh Ave. at 56th St. For more information, call 581-1212.)

Readings—April 28 at 6:30: An evening of Vietnamese poetry (in translation) and music, with John Balaban, Nguyen Ngoc Bich, and Ngo Thanh Nhan. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ April 28 at 8: Ernest J. Gaines and Sue Miller will read from their own fiction. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.). . . ¶ April 29 at 8: Calvin Trillin will read from "Remembering Denny." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 3 at 7:30: T. Coraghessan Boyle and Susan Fromberg Schaeffer will read from their own fiction. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.). . . ¶ May 3 at 8: Actor Brian Bedford and translator Richard Wilbur will present an evening of Molière and Racine. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Talks—April 28 at 7: Poet Raymond Patterson and vocalist Gwen Cleveland, among others, will participate in a panel discussion about poetry and the blues. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. For free tickets, which are required, call 431-7920.). . . ¶ April 29 at 6:30: Armond White, film critic for *The City Sun,* will lead a panel discussion about African-American cinema in the nineties. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. 870-1671.). . . ¶ May 2 at 7:30: Dominick Dunne will talk about his new book, "A Season in Purgatory." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Walks and Tours—May 1 at 11: Eye On Art Tours will preview a contemporary-art sale at Christie's, and teach the rules of bidding. For more information, call 877-5117. . . . ¶ May 2 at 9: Ellis Island, with an emphasis on the Jewish experience there; sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For more information, call 439-1090.

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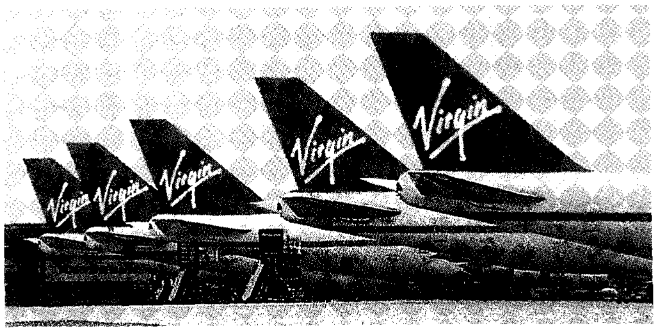

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 29.

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Map of the Human Heart" (directed by Vincent Ward).
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea.
Theatre 3: "Léolo" (†).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 5: "Okoge" (Takehiro Nakajima, in Japanese).
Theatre 6: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Good Evening, Mr. Wallenberg" (1990, Kjell Grede).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 2: "Passion Fish" (†).
Theatre 3: Through April 29: "Point of No Return" (John Badham). From April 30: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "El Mariachi" (†).
Theatre 2: "This Boy's Life" (†).
Theatre 3: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 4: "Just Another Girl on the I.R.T" (Leslie Harris).
Theatre 5: Through April 29: "The Crush" (†). From April 30: "Three of Hearts" (†).
Theatre 6: Through April 29: "Falling Down" (Joel Schumacher), with Michael Douglas. From April 30: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 7: Through April 29: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray. From April 30: "The Pickle" (Paul Mazursky), with Danny Aiello.

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Four films by Monika Treut.

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through April 29: "The Panama Deception" (Barbara Trent). From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 2: "Bodies, Rest & Motion" (†).
Theatre 3: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.
Theatre 4: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).
Theatre 5: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 6: "Claire of the Moon" (Nicole Conn).
Theatre 7: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Born Yesterday" (Luis Mandoki).
Theatre 2: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.
Theatre 3: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 4: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 5: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 6: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 2: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).
Theatre 3: Through April 29: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover. From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 4: "Benny & Joon" (†).

34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 3: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Enchanted April (Mike Newell).

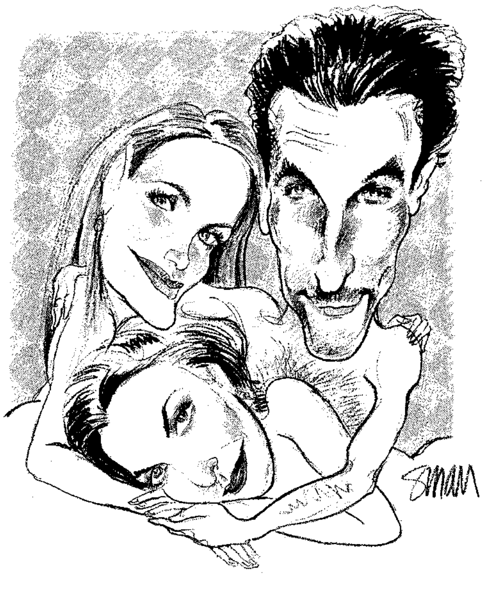
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

SUTTON I AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea.
Theatre 2: Through April 29: "The Crying Game." From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
To be announced.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Ethan Frome" (John Madden), with Liam Neeson.

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Dark Half" (†).



Kelly Lynch, Sherilyn Fenn, and William Baldwin in "Three of Hearts."

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Falling Down" (Joel Schumacher), with Michael Douglas.

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Map of the Human Heart" (Vincent Ward).
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Wide Sargasso Sea" (†).
Theatre 2: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).
Theatre 3: "Howards End" (James Ivory).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 2: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.
Theatre 3: "The Sandlot" (†).
Theatre 4: Through April 29: "Cop and a Half" (Henry Winkler), with Burt Reynolds. From April 30: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 5: "Watch It" (Thomas Flynn).
Theatre 6: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.

GEMINI I AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 2: Through April 29: "The Crush" (†). From April 30: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through April 29: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood). From April 30: "The Pickle" (Paul Mazursky).

NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.
Theatre 2: "Indecent Proposal" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Last Days of Chez Nous" (Gillian Armstrong).

TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"This Boy's Life" (†).

EAST 85TH STREET, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Indecent Proposal" (†).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Cop and a Half" (Henry Winkler).
Theatre 2: "Sandlot" (†).

ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through April 29: "The Crush" (†). From April 30: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 2: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.
Theatre 3: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 4: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).
Theatre 5: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 7: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through April 29: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood). From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Execution Protocol" (directed by Stephen Trombley), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography" (†).

WAVERLY I AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Sandlot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.
Theatre 2: "The Dark Half" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through April 29: "American Friends" (Tristan Powell), with Michael Palin. From April 30: To be announced.
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 3: "Riff-Raff" (Ken Loach).
Theatre 4: "Ethan Frome" (John Madden), with Liam Neeson.

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: Through April 29: "The Sandlot" (†). From April 30: "Three of Hearts" (†).
Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.
Theatre 3: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 4: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea.
Theatre 6: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 7: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).
Theatre 8: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 9: Through April 29: "Falling Down" (Joel Schumacher), with Michael Douglas. From April 30: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Crush" (†).
Theatre 2: Through April 29: "Cop and a Half" (Henry Winkler), with Burt Reynolds. From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 3: "Passion Fish" (†).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: Through April 29: (Matinées only) "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III" (Stuart Gillard); and (evenings only) "Mac" (John Turturro). From April 30: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.
Theatre 3: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French).
Theatre 4: "Falling Down" (Joel Schumacher), with Michael Douglas.
Theatre 5: "The Sandlot" (†).
Theatre 6: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Benny & Joon" (†).

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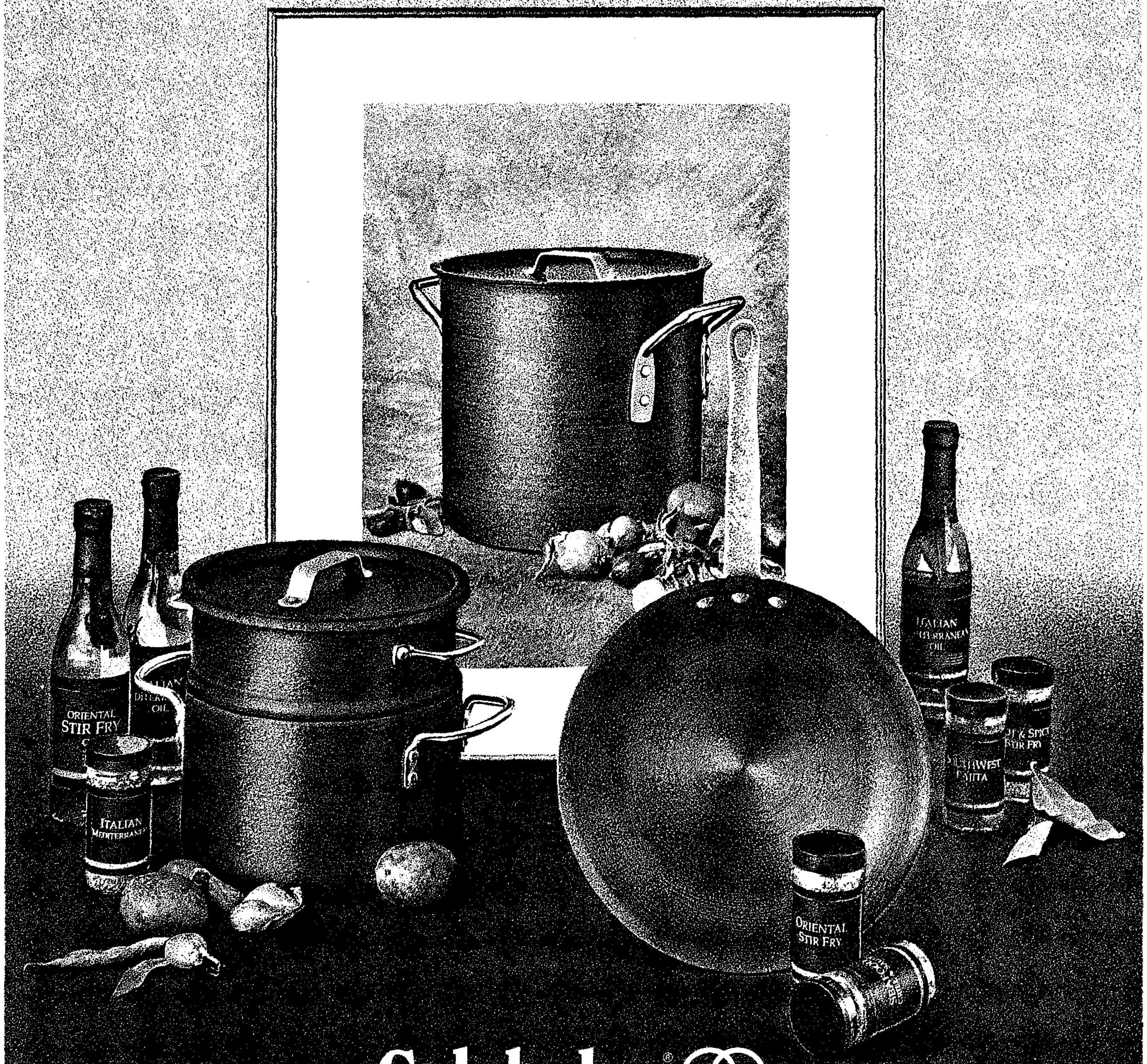
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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Bodies, Rest & Motion" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"El Mariachi" (†).

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Howards End" (James Ivory).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Benny & Joon" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Léolo" (†).
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 3: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea.
Theatre 4: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (†).
Theatre 5: "Olivier Olivier" (Agnieszka Holland; in French).
Theatre 6: "Stolen Children" (Gianni Amelio, in Italian).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through April 29: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.
From April 30: "The Pickle" (Paul Mazursky), with Danny Aiello.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "This Boy's Life" (†).
Theatre 2: Through April 29: "Falling Down" (Joel Schumacher), with Michael Douglas. From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 3: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 4: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 5: Through April 29: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda. From April 30: "Three of Hearts" (†).
Theatre 6: "Dark Half" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Cop and a Half" (Henry Winkler), with Burt Reynolds.
Theatre 2: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Huck Finn" (Stephen Sommers), with Elijah Wood.
Theatre 2: "The Sandlot" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Just Another Girl on the I.R.T." (directed by Leslie Harris).
Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 3: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.
Theatre 4: "Who's the Man?"
Theatre 5: "The Crush" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea.
Theatre 7: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through April 29: "Born Yesterday" (Luis Mandoki).
From April 30: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Huck Finn" (Stephen Sommers), with Elijah Wood.
Theatre 2: "Fire in the Sky" (Robert Lieberman).
Theatre 3: "Aladdin," an animated film

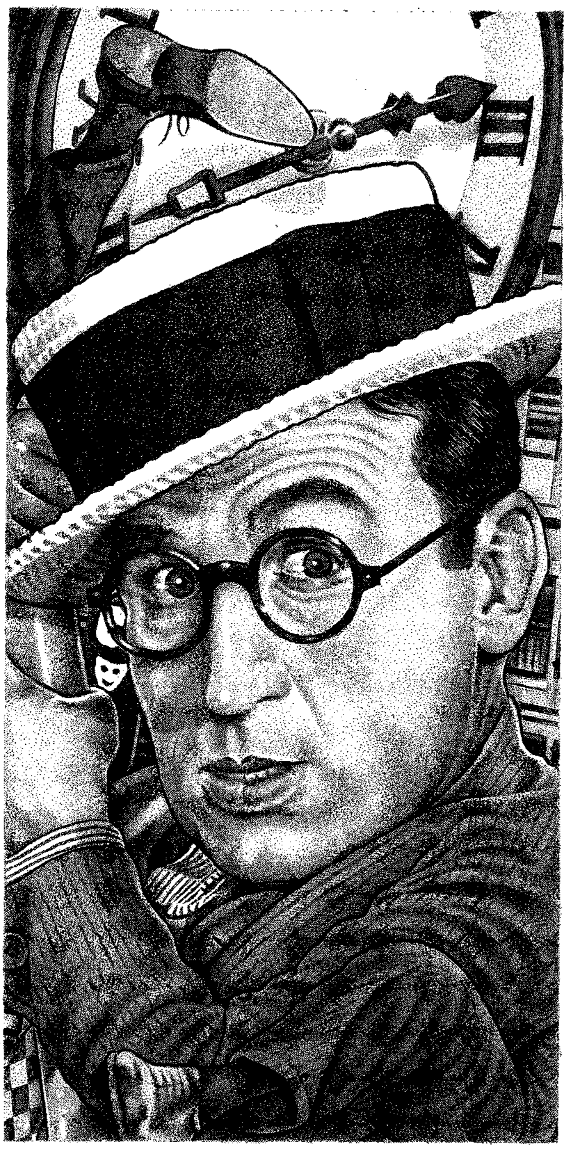
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Indecent Proposal" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cop and a Half" (Henry Winkler).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through April 29: "Money from Home" (1954, directed by George Marshall), with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis; and "The Charge at Feather River" (1953, Gordon Douglas).
From April 30: "Safety Last" (1923, Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor; silent), with Harold Lloyd; and "The Kid Brother" (1927, Ted Wilde and J. A. Howe; silent), with Lloyd.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
April 28: "Sweethearts" (1938, W. S. Van Dyke), with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy; and "On the Avenue" (1937, Roy Del Ruth), with Madeleine Carroll.
April 29-30: "Two Girls and a Sailor" (1944, Richard Thorpe); and "Footlight Parade" (1933, Lloyd Bacon), with James Cagney, Dick Powell, and Ruby Keeler.
May 1: Theatre closed.
May 2-3: "Broadway Melody of 1936" (1935, Roy Del Ruth), with Eleanor Powell, Jack Benny, and Robert Taylor; and "The Band Wagon" (1953, Vincente Minnelli), with Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse.
From May 4: "Easter Parade" (1948, Charles Walters), with Fred Astaire and Judy Garland; and "Greenwich Village" (1944, Walter Lang), with Carmen Miranda and Don Ameche.



A Harold Lloyd centennial retrospective at Film Forum 2.

DREW FRIEDMAN

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
April 28: "Dirty Harry" (1971, Don Siegel), with Clint Eastwood; and "The Enforcer" (1976, James Fargo), with Eastwood.
April 29: "In Cold Blood" (1967, Richard Brooks), with Robert Blake and Scott Wilson; and "Looking for Mr. Goodbar" (1977, Brooks), with Diane Keaton.
April 30-May 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946, Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais; and "Black Orpheus" (1959, Marcel Camus; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).
May 2: "Rebecca" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier; and "The Spiral Staircase" (1948, Robert Siodmak), with Dorothy McGuire.
May 3: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977, Buñuel; in French).
May 4: "One, Two, Three" (1961, Billy Wilder), with James Cagney; and "The Apartment" (1960, Wilder), with Jack Lemmon.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 29 at 2:30: "Deserter" (1988, directed by Giorgos Korras; in Greek). . . . ¶ April 29 at 3 and 6: "Saturday Night, Sunday Morning: The Travels of Gatemouth Moore" (1992, Louis Giuda), a documentary. . . . ¶ April 29 at 6: "Daphnis and Chloe" (1931, Orestes Laskos; in Greek). . . . ¶ April 30 at 2:30: "Until the Ship Sails" (1966, Alexis Damianos; in Greek). . . . ¶ April 30 at 3 and 6, May 1 at 5, and May 2 at 2:30: Three different programs of short French films. . . . ¶ April 30 at 6: "Never on Sunday" (1960, Jules Dassin; in English and Greek). . . . ¶ May 1 at 2: "The Children of Helidona" (1987, Costas Vrettakos in Greek). . . . ¶ May 1 at 2:30 and May 4 at 6: "Farrebique, les Quatre Saisons" (1946, Georges Rouquier; in French). . . . ¶ May 1 at 5: "Rembetiko" (1983, Costas Ferris; in Greek). . . . ¶ May 2 at 2: "The Engagement of Anna" (1972, Pantelis Voulgaris; in Greek). . . . ¶ May 2 at 5: "Thanos and Despina" (1967, Nicos Papatakis; in Greek). . . . ¶ May 2 at 5 and May 4 at 3: "Biquefarre" (1983, Georges Rouquier; in French). . . . ¶ May 3 at 2:30: "Electra" (1962, Michael Cacoyannis; in Greek), with Irene Papas. . . . ¶ May 3 at 6: "The Price of Love" (1984, Tonia Marketaki; in Greek). . . . ¶ May 4 at 2:30: "Sweet Bunch" (1983, Nikos Nikolaidis; in Greek). . . . ¶ May 4 at 6: "Topos" (1985, Antoinetta Angelidi; in Greek).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—April 28 at 2 and 6:30: "Niiwam" (1992, Clarence Delgado). . . . ¶ April 28 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Zan Boko" (1988, Gaston Kaboré). . . . ¶ April 29 at 2 and 6:30 and April 30 at 4 and 8: "Yaaba" (1989, Idrissa Ouedraogo). . . . ¶ April 29 at 4:15 and 8:45 and April 30 at 2, 6, and 10: "Brightness" (1987, Souleymane Cissé). . . . ¶ May 1 at 4:15, May 2 at 6:15, and May 3 at 8:15: "Naked Lunch" (1991, David Cronenberg), with Judy Davis. . . . ¶ May 1 at 6:45 and May 3 at 2: "Impromptu" (1991, James Lapine), with Davis. . . . ¶ May 1 at 9, May 2 at 4:15, and May 3 at 4: "High Tide" (1987, Gillian Armstrong), with Davis. . . . ¶ May 2 at 8:30, May 3 at 6, and May 4 at 4: "Georgia" (1989, Ben Lewin), with Davis. . . . ¶ May 4 at 2: "My Brilliant Career" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—May 1 at 2: "Stand Up and Cheer" (1934, Hamilton McFadden). . . . ¶ May 1 at 4: "Hollywood Party" (†). . . . ¶ May 2 at 2: "Kid Boots" (1926, Frank Tuttle; silent). . . . ¶ May 2 at 3:45: "Glorifying the American Girl" (1929, Millard Webb). . . . ¶ May 2 at 5:30: "The Half-Naked Truth" (1933, Gregory La Cava).

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—May 4 at 7:30: "The Miracle" (1948, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 4 at 8:30: "Hail Mary" (see page 29).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA"
DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Out of the Manger

IN "Hail Mary" (playing May 4, at Symphony Space), the 1985 retelling of the Annunciation and Nativity, that *adulte terrible* Jean-Luc Godard tries to eat his Communion wafer and have it, too—to make both a serious modern statement about the Immaculate Conception and a sort of straight-faced burlesque. What's shocking about the movie is its reverence. Of course, churchgoers may find the explicit sexuality appalling—doubly so because the woman who disrobes here is the Virgin Mary, and the man who keeps trying to get into her bed is her impatient fiancé, Joseph. But Godard doesn't present them as symbolic figures in a sleazy new type of crèche. He depicts them as if they never got turned into Gospel and somehow just popped up in the late twentieth century, in working-class Switzerland. He tries to scrape away the layers of piety that prevent viewers from imaginatively experiencing Biblical events in all their far-out glory. It's easy to tune out during intermittent dull patches; the movie is best seen after reading the hilarious exposition of it in the 1986 collection "Crackpot: The Obsessions of John Waters." But, on the whole, the picture is likably gaga, and fresher than most of the director's later work—for Godard, the New Testament is virgin territory.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Benny & Joon—This is billed as an offbeat love story, but that's too kind: it misses the beat altogether. Benny Pearl (Aidan Quinn) is an auto mechanic who spends most of his time looking after his sister Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson). She's a bit crazy, although any real madness is kept strictly within the cute limits set by the director, Jeremiah Chechik. There's nothing dangerous or even disquieting about her, just an excess of creative ability and the urge to wear a swimming mask and snorkel in public. But one eccentric isn't enough for this movie. Enter Sam (Johnny Depp), a hopeless case with a taste for clowning and magic who finds a kindred spirit in Joon. "He's sweeter than he is judgmental," she murmurs, which says it all. They fall in love, and stroll past a couple of upsets towards a happy ending. It's one long shower of whimsy, much of it borrowed from elsewhere; when Depp does a little dance with two bread rolls, everyone around him grins with delight, as if they never saw Chaplin doing the same thing. Quinn struggles to give it some dignity, but he can't do anything about Barry Berman's script. "You're blessed," he tells Depp. "You could be the new Buster Keaton." If that kind of heresy doesn't make you weep, nothing will.—A.L. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Coronet, 86th Street East Twin, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Bodies, Rest & Motion—Michael Steinberg's movie is set in the Southwestern town of Enfield. A young, unloving couple called Nick (Tim Roth) and Beth (Bridget Fonda) are about to leave town; instead, they leave each other. Nick drives off into the desert, thirsting vainly for his roots, while Beth stays home and goes to bed with a housepainter, Sid (Eric Stoltz). Why she should do this is anyone's guess; but then private motivation, like much else about the film, seems arbitrary and floating. Steinberg wants to tell a tale of boredom, of a generation almost too cool to make decisions, and it's no surprise that his movie should fall prey to the same failings; as time passes, and as Stoltz's character labors us with dud hippie mantras, it becomes hard to care what happens to these people. Tim Roth survives by the sheer prickly push of personality, and Phoebe Cates has some upbeat moments as his ex-girlfriend, but it's a struggle all the way. The camera follows suit; the crisp, sunbaked images of the first half hour promise a clarity that slowly blurs and fades.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/12/93.) (Village East Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

Boiling Point—An overdressed stiff. The writer-director, James B. Harris, drapes the thin plot of "Money Men," Gerald Petievich's 1981 novel about funny-money scams, with forties nostalgia and film noir existentialism. Petievich's con-man catalyst becomes a Dapper Dan who loves the Big Band era. Harris wastes his energy drawing parallels between this retro villain (Dennis Hopper) and the contemporary hero (Wesley Snipes), a T-man who likewise feels that his world is crumbling. The weird dreaminess and forced analogies slow the movie down. The resulting torpor swallows up the capable Snipes and the colorful Hopper, along with Lolita Davidovich, Seymour Cassel, Valerie Perrine, Jonathan Banks, Tony Lo Bianco, Viggo Mortensen, and Dan Hedaya.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Crush—No thrills—not even sleazy ones. The producers must have found the high concept irresistible: "Fatal Attraction" meets "Lolita." But did they ever read the script? Cary Elwes plays a magazine writer who is flattered and then victimized by his landlord's infatuated fourteen-year-old daughter (Alicia Silverstone). The writer-director, Alan Shapiro, hasn't given his cast a single original line, and the plot has fewer twists than Silverstone has curves.—M.S. (Worldwide Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII, Gemini, and Orpheum VII; through April 29.)

The Dark Half—With Timothy Hutton, directed by George A. Romero. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Hollywood Party (1934)—Plunked down right in the middle of this M-G-M musical revue is a Disney cartoon about some chocolate soldiers who melt in the sun; the cartoon is introduced by Mickey Mouse, an uninvited guest at the Hollywood Party. Who were the hosts? The picture doesn't carry producer or director credits; the entire extravaganza is hit-or-miss casual, as if the brass at M-G-M didn't want to admit having commited themselves to make the thing, and the big M-G-M stars never show up. Instead, you get Jimmy Durante in a Tarzan takeoff and singing a song about reincarnation, as well as Polly Moran as an oil tycoon's wife, Charles Butterworth and Ted Healy, and June Clyde, Jack Pearl, and Lupe Velez, who join Laurel & Hardy in an egg-breaking routine. Some fairly funny moments, and a pleasant score. The directing by Richard Boleslawski, Allan Dwan, and Roy Rowland.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 1.)

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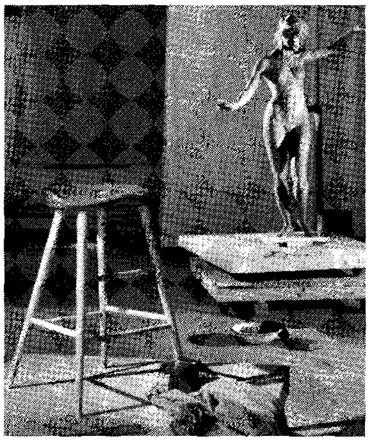

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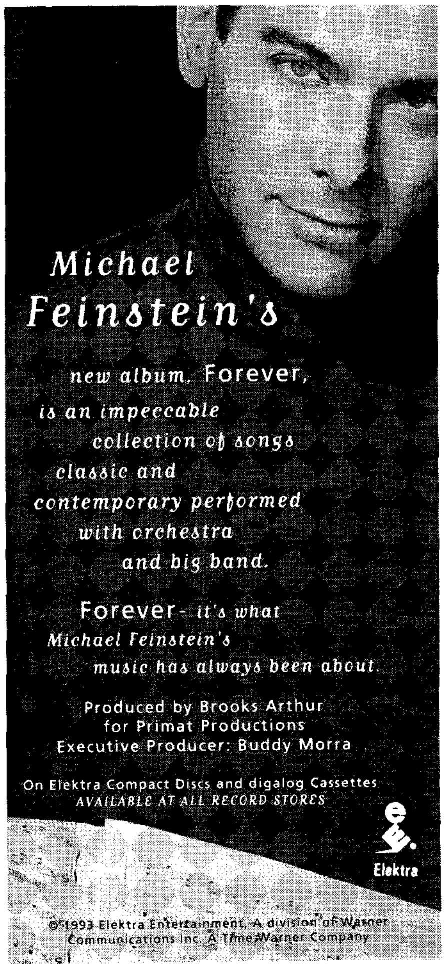

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IN BRIEF-Cont'd

Indecent Proposal—The first and last scenes of this movie vaguely remind you of an old Claude Lelouch weepie—lovers looking wretched in a picturesque fog. Nothing in between is much clearer; this is a humorless, muddle-headed slog through familiar territory. David and Diana Murphy (Woody Harrelson and Demi Moore) are a young married couple, desperate for money, who vainly try their luck at the tables of Las Vegas. Enter John Gage (Robert Redford), who is so smitten by Diana that he offers her a million dollars for one night of love. That's the dilemma, but it never grips you; the director, Adrian Lyne, is bored by anything that smacks of moral complication, preferring to show us what a juicy, unflustered life you can enjoy with that kind of cash. The movie is hardly in a position to chastise Gage for his empty soul when its own style is one of numbing, desolate slickness. None of the performers is given a chance—Harrelson, previously so good in "White Men Can't Jump," looks embarrassed just to be here. And if it's sex you've come to see, don't bother: most of it was already in the trailer.—A.L. (4/26/93) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Léolo—Weird but none too wonderful. Jean-Claude Lauzon's film is set partly in Montreal and partly inside the bustling imagination of its hero. Léolo (Maxime Collin) is a young boy who thinks, quite mistakenly, that he's Italiân—a fairly mild delusion by the standard of his family, most of whom are crazy about bodily functions and heading straight for the asylum. You see Grandfather having his toenails clipped by the teeth of a young girl, and Léolo himself attending the ritual rape of a cat, but you don't even bother to be repelled; this is Believe It or Not cinema, and the answer is mostly Not. Lauzon's reckless fancy doesn't have anything to brace against, to spring off from: he tires you out by trying too hard to shock you. Worst of all, he lathers the images with extra voice-over, just in case you don't get what's going on. That smacks of cowardice; as Buñuel showed long ago, the first duty of a good Surrealist is to have the courage of his own concoctions. In French.—A.L. (4/12/93) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

El Mariachi—This first film by twenty-four-year-old Robert Rodriguez was made for seven thousand dollars, and part of its enormous charm is that it really looks like a seven-thousand-dollar movie. It's a grubby little thriller, set in a Mexican border town, about a wandering mariachi musician (Carlos Gallardo) who is mistaken for a killer. Rodriguez establishes a delirious pace, and keeps the bullets flying and the corpses crumpling for a brisk, and appropriately terse, eighty-two minutes. The movie has the sort of dry, bracingly unwholesome humor that relentless mayhem can produce if the characters are mean and abject enough and the storytelling is speedy and laconic. This young filmmaker is no visual wizard; he's just an energetic and imaginative manipulator of tried-and-true genre conventions. But if you enter his seedy world with expectations as low as the picture's aspirations, you'll probably have a very good time. In Spanish.—T.R. (2/22/93) (Village Theatre VII, and Angelika 57.)

My Brilliant Career (1979)—This Australian film—the pictorial recreation of a late-Victorian novel—shows considerable charm and craft, though it's essentially taxidermy. The impoverished, sixteen-year-old heroine, Sybylla (Judy Davis), spends most of the movie pursuing a wealthy, aristocratic bachelor (Sam Neill)—a tall, thin "man of the world." He seems to be the only thing on her mind; she publicly displays her jealousy, and she is a thoroughgoing sexual tease. But when she has him half crazy and he proposes, she hits him with a whip. It seems she intends to have her own career as an artist. The appeal of this material to the modern women filmmakers (the twenty-seven-year-old director Gillian Armstrong, the screenwriter Eleanor Witcombe, the producer Margaret Fink) must be in Sybylla's desire for independence, but they don't clarify what's going on in their heroine. From the evidence of the film, the book, which was written by a sixteen-year-old girl under the name Miles Franklin, is a gothic feminist fantasy: feisty Cinderella wins Prince Charming but turns him down and goes off to fulfill herself. Though the movie doesn't go any deeper into the material than this sort of feminine self-infatuation, Sybylla is treated as if she were a precursor of the new woman: a model of the woman who resists conventional blandishments. The twenty-three-year-old Judy Davis is memorable: she suggests a blooming, broad-faced version of Katharine Hepburn's tomboy Jo in "Little Women."—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; May 4.)

Passion Fish—Eighteen years ago, John Sayles might have boiled down this back-to-basics portrait of a paralyzed, bitter white soap star (Mary McDonnell) and her strong-willed black caretaker (Alfre Woodard) into a twenty-page short story. But as a movie writer-director-editor, he lets himself gas on about it for two and a quarter hours. Sayles has an ear for regional accents and colloquial dialogue, and an eye for quotidian details. But he's better on nuts and bolts than he is on heart and soul. Sayles predictably alternates scenes of rehab drama and female friendship with comic relief and local (Louisiana) color.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

The Sandlot—With nine prepubescent kids doing shtick, one drooling mammoth dog, a voice-over soaked in early-sixties nostalgia, and the message that baseball brings fathers and sons together, this movie is an unholy pastiche of "The Bad News Bears," "Beethoven," "The Wonder Years," and "Field of Dreams." The director, David Mickey Evans, takes his timeworn premise—a new boy in town finds himself when he joins a sandlot baseball team—and tries to make it mythic through hyperbole. There's a snappy change-of-pace gag involving a little guy and a nubile lifeguard, but the screams and barks and fraudulent emotions grow wearying.—M.S. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Worldwide Cinemas, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through April 29.)

The Story of Qiu Ju—This new film by the Chinese director Zhang Yimou is a far cry from his earlier work. After such intense, forbidding fables as "Red Sorghum" and "Raise the Red Lantern" we are now offered a rough-edged comedy about a man kicked in the groin by the village elder. The victim's wife Qiu Ju (played by Gong Li) is determined to see justice done; all she wants is an apology, but the quest for it takes her away from village life and into the chaos of the city. She and her sister-in-law wander around (through the first modern crowds we have seen in a Zhang film) and get snared in bureaucratic red tape. The rhythm of the movie is a kind of gentle shuffle, and its beauty the result more of accident, you feel, than design; corncobs and chilies hanging from the roof of a hut are all that remain of the violent reds and yellows that glared throughout Zhang's second feature, "Ju Dou." It was brave to turn away from that driven style, but not altogether wise; who would have thought that a Zhang Yimou film could ever turn out to be something of a drag? In Mandarin.—A.L. (4/26/93) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Strictly Ballroom—Baz Luhrmann's first film brings good news: Australian cinema is on the move again, with a vigor not seen since the days of "Mad Max." There's no violence in "Strictly Ballroom"—the general lack of unpleasantness, in fact, is quite unnerving—but the speed of it still leaves you reeling. A young dancer, played by Paul Mercurio, acquires a new partner (Tara Morice), dreams up a flash routine, and sets out to break the Old Guard. The plot is cut-rate melodrama, and Luhrmann knows it; but he never sneers at his hero's ambitions. Besides, there are so many other things to laugh at—the costumes, the minor characters with their major obsessions, the psychedelic makeup, the trashy music. The movie is over before you know it, and is not one to linger in the mind, or indeed pass through the mind at all; but it's a good-humored ride for the senses, never too sickly, and who can say no to that?—A.L. (2/15/93) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

This Boy's Life—Michael Caton-Jones' absorbing film is based on Tobias Wolff's 1989 memoir of growing up in the fifties. The screenplay, by Robert Getchell (who also wrote "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"), initially presents teen-age Toby (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his mother, Caroline (Ellen Barkin), as a pair of cheerful road-movie nomads, wandering from town to town and picking their destinations almost randomly. Their troubles start when Caroline, thinking that Toby needs a father, marries a small-town clod named Dwight (Robert De Niro), who proves to be a bully—the sort of guy who fancies himself king of the castle and takes pleasure in making his subjects bend to his will. Dwight is one-dimensional; we learn everything we need to know about him early on. Fortunately, the movie doesn't stay cooped up in his gloomy castle. And Barkin and DiCaprio are sensational. Every time De Niro threatens to take over the picture, they snatch our attention right back, and always with something casual: a look or a gesture that conveys how thoroughly this mother and son understand each other.—T.R. (4/19/93) (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Three of Hearts—With William Baldwin, Kelly Lynch, and Sherilyn Fenn; directed by Yurek Bogayevicz. (See illustration on page 26.) (Village Theatre VII, Worldwide Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex; starting April 30.)

Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography—This documentary, directed by Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, and Stuart Samuels, is much more fun than its college-catalogue title suggests. The movie is cheery, convivial, and swift: for ninety minutes, stunning images, drawn from all eras of movie history, pass before us, and we listen to a couple of dozen veteran cinematographers speaking about what they do. The craftsmen are a likable and unpretentious bunch, and it's easy to share their delight in the achievements of their colleagues and masters: the film is a joy to look at. (The clips are taken from the best possible prints, and they're all shown in their original aspect ratios.) Movie-lovers can argue with some of the filmmakers' choices—the near total exclusion of images from Westerns is the most serious flaw—but, in a strange way, that's part of the picture's charm. It has the power to revive senses that have been dulled by the crushing predictability of recent movies.—T.R. (4/5/93) (Film Forum.)

Wide Sargasso Sea—John Duigan's adaptation of Jean Rhys's strange and memorable 1966 novel is set in the West Indies of the mid-nineteenth century, and an air of thick tropical sensuality pervades the movie's imagery. The hero, a young Englishman named Edward Rochester (Nathaniel Parker), arrives in Jamaica sick with fever after his long ocean passage; his stay on the island, during which he marries a ravishing Creole heiress named Antoinette Cosway (Karina Lombard), is a blur of heightened perception and disordered reason. As the marriage goes bad, events take on a nightmarish inevitability, as if they were moving toward a preordained end. They are: the hero of this picture is the younger self of the Rochester that Charlotte Brontë created in "Jane Eyre," the brooding landowner who kept his mad wife locked up in his English estate house; and Antoinette is the young woman who became his prisoner and his shameful secret. Duigan and his cinematographer, Geoff Burton, merge the luxuriant erotic tension of a tropical idyll with the clammy apprehension of gothic fiction. And the film is so serenely paced and so envelopingly lovely to watch that you may not realize until the end that it is, in the deepest sense, a horror movie—an intimate portrayal of the relationship between a monster and his victim.—T.R. (4/19/93) (Cinema I.)

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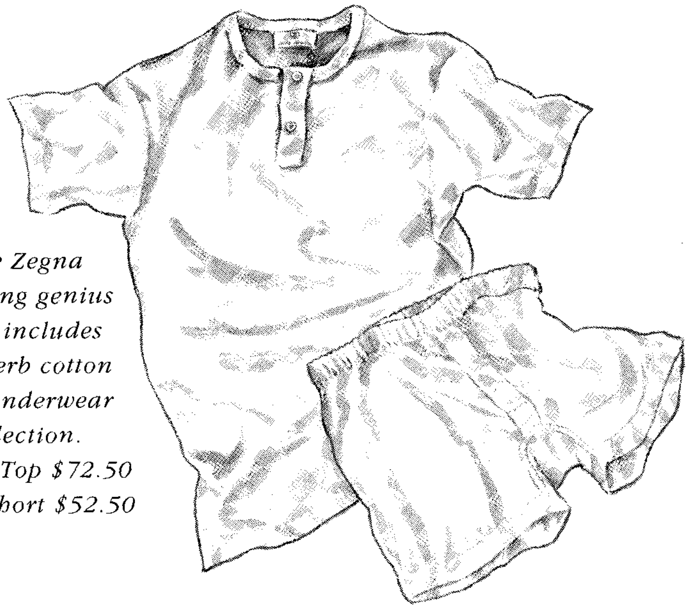

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NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

LINCOLN WINDFALL

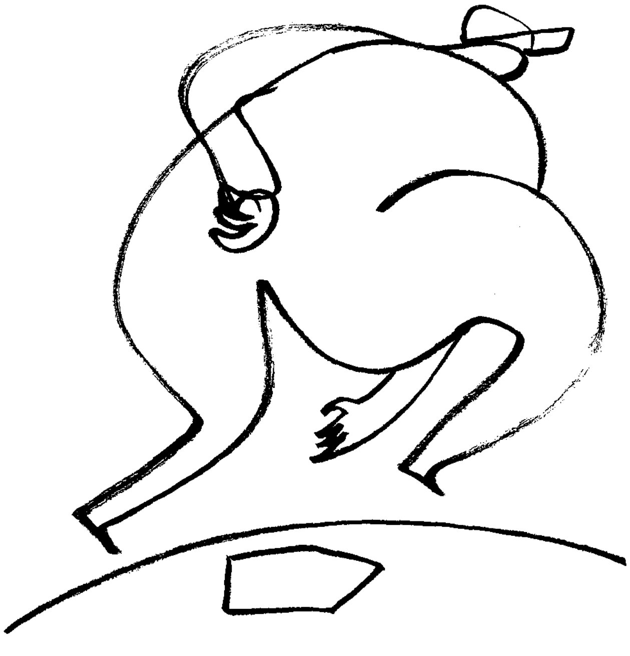
EVERYONE, it appears, agrees on this much: a woman named Mariah Vance worked as a maid for Abraham Lincoln's family in the eighteen-fifties, when the future President was a successful lawyer and aspiring politician in Springfield, Illinois. But Lincoln scholars and aficionados have broken ranks over a manuscript that recently surfaced, purporting to be a memoir of Mrs. Vance's decade with the Lincolns. Notwithstanding the controversy, William Morrow has reportedly agreed to pay a million dollars for the project.

Not long ago, John Y. Simon, a professor of history at Southern Illinois University, was sent a copy of the manuscript, which he says is "fascinating, in its way." It appears that the household that Mariah Vance observed was not a happy one. Her account of Mary Todd Lincoln, whom she called de Missy, reveals a woman who was prone to jealous rages about Lincoln's former flame, Ann Rutledge, and all but addicted to paregoric, an opium-based painkiller. On one memorable occasion, according to Mrs. Vance, Mrs. Lincoln lunged at her husband with a kitchen knife and shouted that the only real love of her life was Stephen Douglas—who was, of course, Lincoln's great political rival.

The portrait of the man Mrs. Vance called Mistah Abe, because she could not pronounce "Lincoln," is more generous. He is seen as tolerant of his erratic spouse and indulgent of his children. In perhaps the most extraordinary passage in the story, Mrs. Vance describes how Lincoln, shortly before he became President, confessed that he had been secretly baptized. The baptism, the future President tells his maid, is to be a secret between the two of them and God.

In its general outlines, Mrs. Vance's story is largely consistent with earlier accounts. Its particulars, however, have been questioned by experts in the field. Michael Burlingame, a professor at Connecticut College and the author of a forthcoming book, "The Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln," says that the idea that Mrs. Lincoln loved Stephen Douglas is "wildly implausible." Professor David Herbert Donald, of Harvard, who, like Professor Burlingame, has not read the manuscript, says, "I very much doubt whether Mrs. Lincoln was jealous of Ann Rutledge. After Lincoln died, Mrs. Lincoln said she had never heard of Ann Rutledge." Several Lincoln scholars who have read the full manuscript have doubts, too. For his part, Professor Simon says that the story of the secret baptism is "the biggest bunch of baloney I've ever heard—hogwash." Other readers have been more supportive. Wayne C. Temple, chief deputy director of the Illinois State Archives, says that the manuscript "revealed knowledge of the Lincoln household that she couldn't have known unless she worked there."

Mariah Vance's story was unearthed by Lloyd Ostendorf, who is a seventy-one-year-old commercial artist and historian of photography in Dayton, Ohio. He said last week that the manuscript had come to him from a woman named Ada Sutton, in Attica, Indiana, who, around the turn of the century, hired Mrs. Vance to do her laundry and took down in her own shorthand Mrs. Vance's stories about the Lincoln family. Mr. Ostendorf first encountered Mrs. Sutton in the nineteen-fifties, he said, and he spent the next two decades trying to persuade her to transcribe her notes. She finally agreed, and completed the task shortly before she died, in 1976. Mr. Ostendorf collects photographs of Lincoln, and in 1963 he published "Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose," which, according to Professor Donald, is "very repu-



JOE DAVIS

table—indeed, the standard work in that field."

Professor Simon communicated to Mr. Ostendorf his doubts about the historical value of Mrs. Vance's memoir. But he later said, "Lloyd's the nicest guy in the world. He's exactly the kind of person you'd like to see a million dollars fall on."

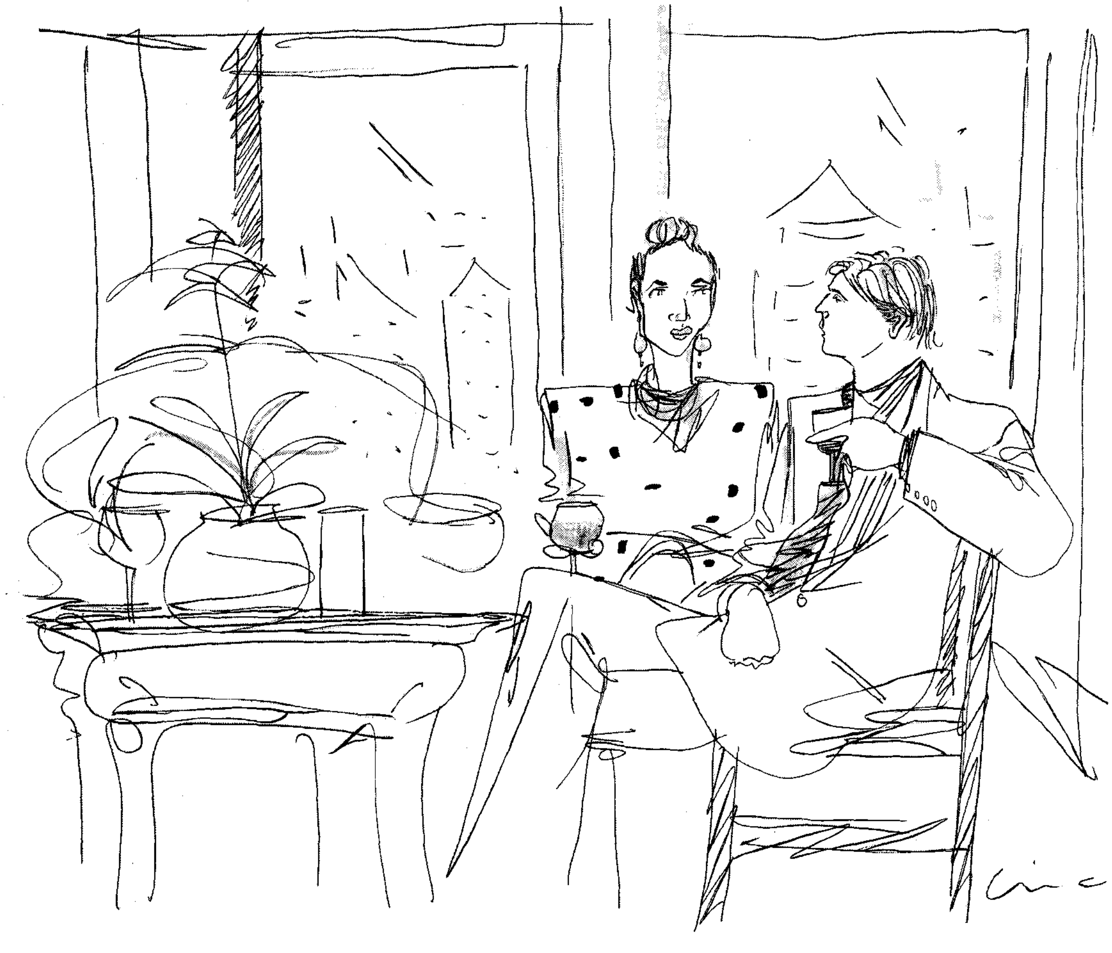
FIGHTING WORDS

AROUND the newsroom of the Boston *Globe*, David Nyhan has had a reputation as a virile, striding figure. The *Globe* is the liberal paper of record in New England, and Nyhan, an associate editor, is one of the reasons. He has been on the staff for twenty-three years, and is a columnist now, known for his progressive views and a bawdy, old-school style. A big Irishman with curling gray hair, he talks in a loud voice, and wears his sleeves rolled up, the way rough-and-tumble newspapermen used to do. So when a reporter named Betsy Lehman overheard him make what she thought was a derogatory and sexist remark to one of her male colleagues, some people were angry, but no one was really surprised.

The word Nyhan used was "pussy-whipped." He applied it to a reporter named Brian McGrory, whom he was trying to goad into playing basketball with him and his friends, who have a game two afternoons a week, during lunch, when the weather is fine. McGrory couldn't play: he had just been given a new assignment by one of his editors (male), and, besides, he had a bad knee. He said that he was baffled by Nyhan's remark, and, more obliquely, that "there was never a woman involved." Ms. Lehman didn't care about that, and neither did the paper's executive vice-president, Benjamin Taylor, who was standing with Nyhan at the time and heard the remark. He upbraided the columnist on the spot. Nyhan says his apologies were immediate, profuse, and grovelling.

The incident has sent the *Globe* into spasms and counterspasms of correctness. The paper had just invested a good sum of money on a series of race-and-gender workshops, none of which Nyhan attended. Management quickly posted a stern memo saying that sexist remarks "will not be tolerated here." Earlier, Nyhan had tacked up a repentant memo of his own. He wandered the newsroom, apologizing to women on the staff. But when a fine of twelve hundred and fifty dollars was levied against him by the *Globe* management a backlash ensued. Some of the grand old men and women of news reporting rallied to Nyhan's cause. They offered to send him checks and gave him crusty words of support. "If they take that phrase from me, I'm speechless" is what one old editor told Nyhan.

Betsy Lehman was on vacation and couldn't be reached, but Nyhan was happy to talk about what he calls "my crude-language episode." He says that the *Globe* management, of which he is part, has rescinded the fine, although he doesn't know exactly why. He had planned to pay the fine anyhow, he said, and he and Lehman "are straight now." Meanwhile, people were coming up to him in public places like Fenway Park, breathing beer and slapping him hard on the back. For an old radical like David Nyhan, that was a strange feeling.



"Of course you're changing. And I'm changing. And Russia is changing, too."

BENCHMARK

JACK B. WEINSTEIN is Orrin Hatch's worst nightmare—the apotheosis of the liberal activist judge. Since Lyndon Johnson appointed him to the federal bench in Brooklyn, in 1967, he has wielded the Constitution like a sabre. He has demanded that homes for the retarded provide better treatment; he has integrated schools; he has even set up a trust fund for alleged victims of Agent Orange.

Shortly after last November's election, Judge Weinstein decided to take senior status, a move that would allow President Clinton to choose his successor. "Even though Clinton is less liberal than I am, I thought Reagan and Bush had enough appointments," he says, "and I want a young person to have the opportunity to enjoy this job." He is, characteristically, going out with a bang. He recently announced that, along with Judge Whitman Knapp, he would refuse to pass sentences on minor drug offenders. The two judges made this decision to protest what they regard as unduly harsh sentencing guidelines, which, they said, wasted taxpayers' money without making any impact on the drug problem. In a memorandum to his fellow-judges announcing this decision, Judge Weinstein described himself as "just a tired old judge who has temporarily filled his quota of remorselessness."

Weinstein was born in 1921 and grew up in Bensonhurst. "I once had a defense lawyer ask for a reduced sentence for his client because of the bad neighborhood the fellow grew up in," he recalls. "I told him, 'Hey, I grew up three blocks from this guy.'" The Judge's family was poor. "I've been earning a living since I was about eight," he says. "I always had several jobs. I used to deliver milk to people's homes by truck or by horse-drawn carriage. The horse was better. He would learn the route very quickly, and then he'd know where to stop."

Weinstein graduated from high school at fifteen, and worked his way through Brooklyn College. "I worked in a warehouse in what is now the Brooklyn Navy Yard," he says, "and I used to sit on the Williamsburg Bridge, looking out over the whole city, to do my homework." During the Second World War, he served in the Navy, working in electronics on submarines. When the war ended, he enrolled at Columbia Law School, and shortly after graduating he started teaching. He remained at Columbia until President Johnson put him on the bench.

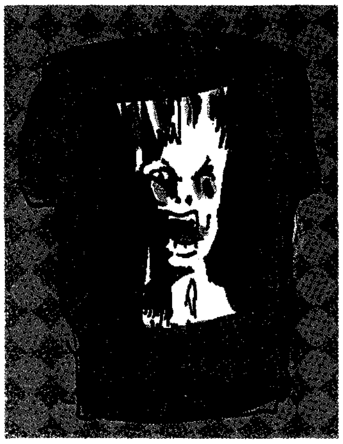
Judge Weinstein is six feet two inches tall and is built like a linebacker. He has a bald head and big, furry black eyebrows. A visitor to his courtroom on a typical day would find him simultaneously conducting a jury trial, reading his mail, editing a law-review article, and conferring with his law clerks. While maintaining a full caseload on the bench, he has continued to produce learned treatises on evidence and civil procedure. "I've always done more than one thing at a time," he says.

The Judge may be best known for the

THE PROBLEM WITH T-SHIRTS

THE arrival of spring has prompted me to reconsider T-shirts, and the problems that go with them. For some people, a T-shirt is just another name for an undershirt, the sort of thing that never sees the light of day. But for others, including me, T-shirts are often the main event, particularly during warm weather.

Like most people, I have a T-shirt collection that has developed as if by osmosis—a free one here, an impulse buy there. At the time of their acquisition, they are negligible possessions—no item of clothing is valued less than the T-shirt, in spite of the fact that a T-shirt, single-handed, turns its wearer into a walking billboard. (Even the plain white ones carry a kind of James Dean-circa-"Rebel Without a Cause" message.) Socks admittedly give a T-shirt competition in the No Respect category, but sock enthusiasts will point out that socks are capable of levels of style and elegance that a T-shirt could never attain.



GARY PANTER

Now and then, a T-shirt fad will pop up, but it's never very convincing. Some time ago, "Frankie Says Relax" was popular. Now it's the "Phillies Blunt" logo. I've always preferred more eclectic T-shirts, such as one I recently received which promotes a publication entitled *Pain Digest*. The logo sprawls across the chest, and the phrase "Advanced Literature for Pain" runs across the back. This item has proved popular at adventurous social occasions.

With the arrival of authentic T-shirt weather, I found myself in a contemplative mood, staring into a drawer devoted exclusively to T-shirts. I had just done the wash, and the T-shirts lay in two neat square piles, like multicolored layer cakes. Some were fairly new, and others were six or seven years old—acquired during a long-departed era. They were like souvenirs from trips I'd once taken. I reached into the pile and felt fabric as soft as cashmere and as cool and smooth as silk.

And here is the real problem with T-shirts: they improve with age, getting better and better, until one day they disappear. Their finest moment is their grand finale. This is true of shoes and jeans, too—especially nowadays, when the more torn and frayed the better—but shoes can always be resoled and jeans can be patched, and both, when all is finally lost, still have a physical presence, a weight you can feel in your hand. But T-shirts just keep getting thinner and finer. Then a tiny hole appears, and then another; a tear along the seam may develop, and one day you reach into your drawer and pull out what to the untrained eye would look like a handkerchief. What then?

It just has to be thrown out, of course. But there's a catch. You don't have to be wildly sentimental to get attached to a T-shirt that belonged to an old flame, or to one advertising a high school or college in faded letters, or even that ridiculous thing that you swore would never see the light of day but that has taken on some importance because you were a whole other person when you first slipped it on. These objects are as evocative as snapshots, but they can't be reproduced.

My own solution is an informal T-Shirt Hall of Fame. Way down at the bottom of the drawer, several T-shirts are lying in state, like antiquities. Sometimes, when I'm fumbling around for a newer model, I'll reach down into the cool darkness and brush against their fragile surfaces, waiting there like understudies for one last day in the sun.

—THOMAS BELLER

informal way he runs his courtroom. He doesn't wear a judicial robe, for example. "I stopped wearing a robe because I just found it too confining," he says. "I like to walk around during a case, and see the evidence the way the jury sees it. I always wore one when my mother came to visit—she liked me in a robe. But she died several years ago." Also, when Judge Weinstein is not conducting a jury trial he seats himself at the counsel table rather than at his marble-backed bench. He believes he is the only federal judge in the nation who operates that way. "When it came to talking to defendants, it was clear to me that they were terrified," he says. "Sitting face to face, you're able to get a good rapport and understand them better. From time to time, I've put a defendant's hand in mine when I've sentenced him. I've put my arm around a family member. I try always to keep in mind that I'm dealing with people. I'm just like them. I'm not some instrument of the Lord."

NEWSHOUNDS

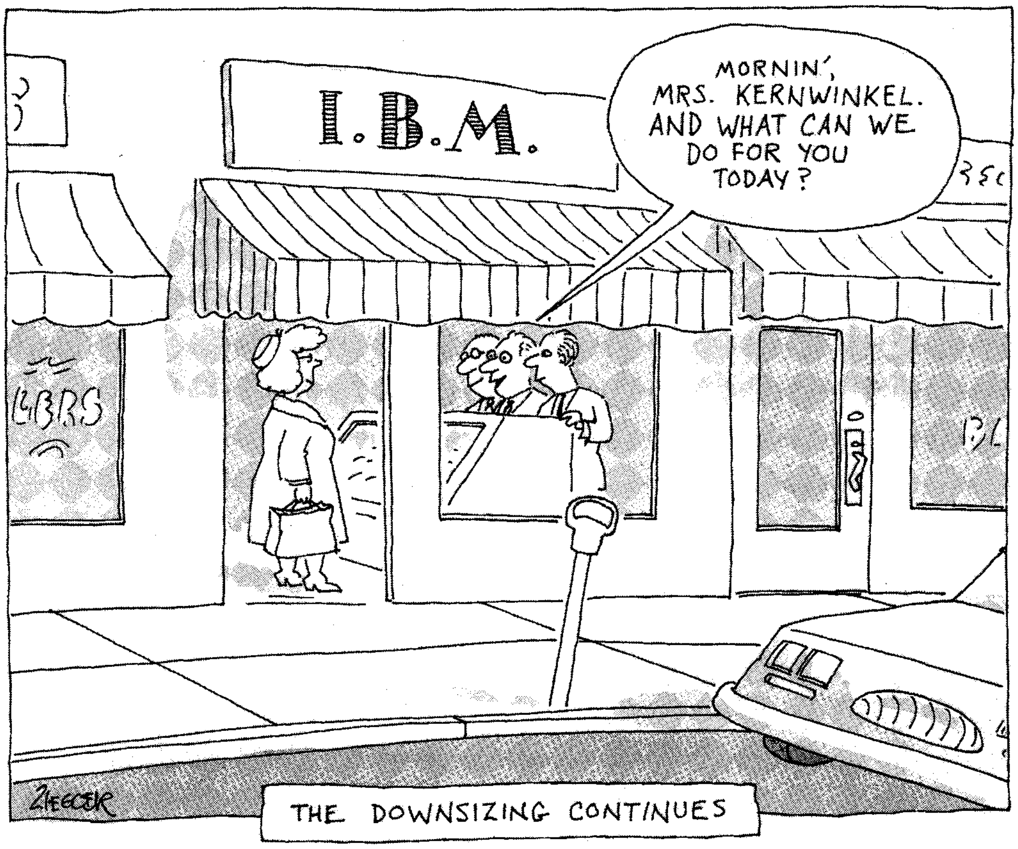
THE migratory patterns of London journalists are fairly well fixed these days. So it was a minor relief to see eleven of them arrive in town not long ago to do a job of real reporting and then go home. They came from the leftish British newspaper the *Guardian*, and put up at the Algonquin Hotel, on Forty-fourth Street. The paper's features editor, Alan Rusbridger, said he'd seen the hotel rooms advertised in the New York *Times*, and at a reasonable price. He said the *Guardian's* intention was to cover Manhattan and the outer boroughs, top to bottom. "The first night, we sent a reporter out to ride with the cabbies," he said. "He hopes to spend tonight in a shelter."

Mr. Rusbridger is a pleasant-faced man with round glasses and a sharp nose. As he sipped on a long vodka-and-tonic and watched the waiters hurry around the hotel lobby in their worn gray coats, he explained that the paper had done this kind of thing before—that three years ago the *Guardian* sent a team to Johannesburg for a week, and, before that, to Tokyo. The other British newshounds, wearing leather jackets and beaten tweed coats, were sitting around a small round table with a bell affixed to the top. "Much higher productivity levels here," the *Guardian's* crime man said in a soft Edinburgh brogue. He had been to the Gambino trial, and had been pleased to get a seat.

The *Guardian's* television critic, Nancy Banks-Smith, was closeted in her room upstairs, and wouldn't come down. "She's shy," Mr. Rusbridger said. "She's so shy she watches television all day long." Ms. Banks-Smith, a veteran in her field, was curious about the new pornographic channels in America, he said. "We only have thirty-eight channels in the Algonquin, so she's found it quite difficult," he said. "In her quest for porn, she finally ended up, at midnight on Saturday, at the home of a slightly eccentric elderly lady. Apparently, what she saw was absolutely filthy. Nancy could barely bring herself to speak about it."

The *Guardian* people were a deferential group, perhaps even a little cowed. A culture reporter named Joanna Coles asked brightly for some tea and was rebuffed by a waiter. She ordered a Virgin Mary with some facility and told about going to Dominick Dunne's book party the night before—by London standards, she said, it was pretty frantic. Gloria Vanderbilt's escort told her that plastic surgeons were in great social demand around the city. "He was very depressed, because he was a psychiatrist," she said. She said she had talked to Gloria Vanderbilt for minutes without knowing who Gloria Vanderbilt was. "Americans just talk, don't they?" she said. "They fill up space."

The reporters said that President Clinton was a hot topic in Britain, so America was hot, too. Joanna Coles had just had lunch with Tama Janowitz. She said Janowitz was a nice person, and not peculiar at all. Another reporter described an exciting ride he'd had on a Manhattan fire truck. Someone else had just seen Peter Jennings, all caked with makeup. A reporter named Ian Katz had been out to Riker's Island that day. "Have you been to the island?" he asked. "It's good value." Katz was the group's ace reporter—its unstoppable man. He ate some cocktail nuts, and said he couldn't draw any solid conclusions about New York City yet. "I've really liked the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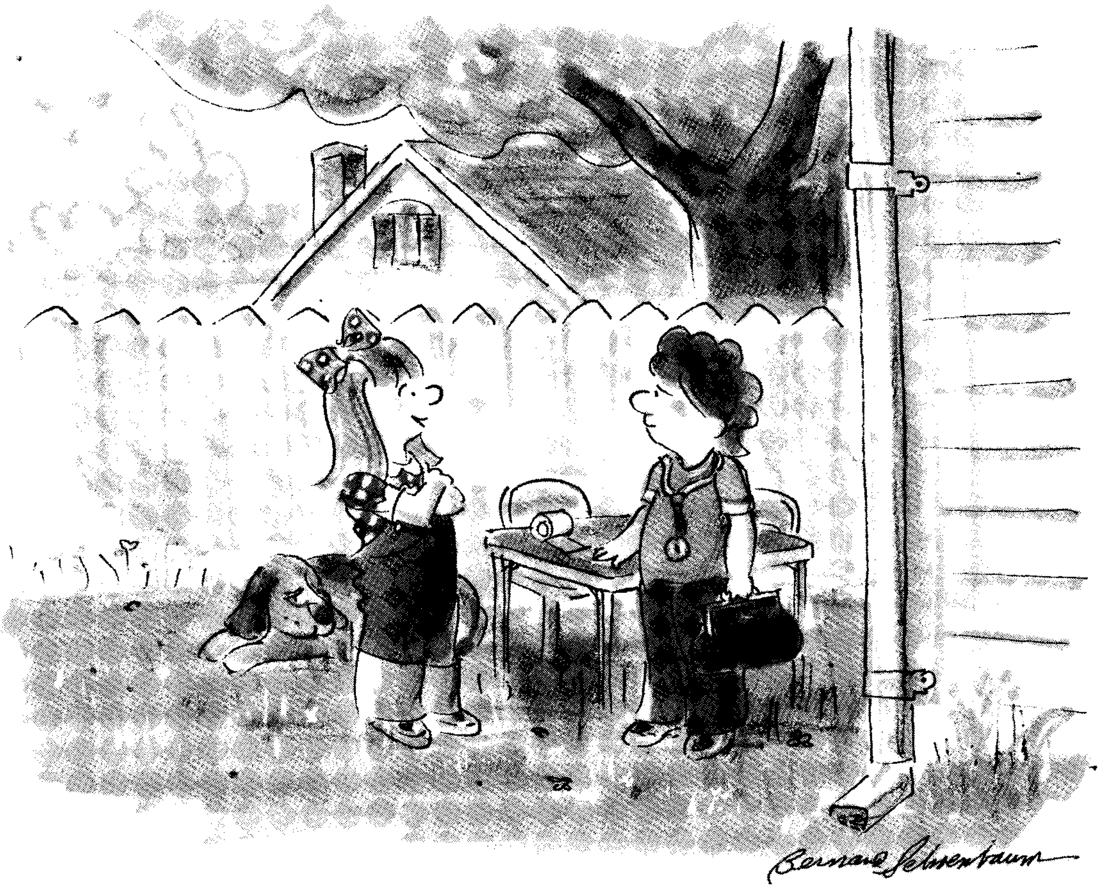
THE DOWNSIZING CONTINUES

sushi," he said. "I've had it every possible night."



"O.K., you be the doctor, and I'll be the Secretary of Health and Human Services."

• •

PACIFIER

CERTAIN things about Barney have to be kept secret, it seems. Not the fact that nearly four million two-to-five-year-olds worship him every day on PBS. Not the fact that Barney is a six-foot-tall magenta dinosaur with an apple-green potbelly and sloppily fat hips and thighs who when he rocks back and forth giggling compulsively in a tone of unequalled feeblemindedness—"*ohh*-ohh-oh, *ohh*-ohh-oh"—jiggles his lumpish body like an over-ripe eggplant. It isn't the fact that lead has been found in Barney accessories (Barney bags, made by Jaclyn, Inc., of West New York, New Jersey, which had excessive lead in their zipper pulls and their inks, have been recalled), since that's been well publicized. But something must be a secret, because, to the mammoth disappointment of children, the Barney people have made Barney cut back on his personal appearances, and they won't let Barney give interviews. A spokeswoman for "Barney & Friends" in Allen, Texas, where the show is taped, said that the dinosaur made sixty-two appearances at shopping malls between October and December last year. "Twenty to forty thousand kids at a whack," she said. "It was dangerous for Barney and the kids."

Adults who claim to admire Barney say he's multicultural and nonviolent. Still, even some of them will admit to finding his facial expression unsettlingly idiotic. His empty, glaring dolls' eyes are the same dark color as the inside of his mouth. Basically, parents who would consider themselves consummate failures if their offspring didn't wind up at Harvard are willing to put up with Barney—not a Harvard type—because he keeps the children still. A psychiatrist on the Upper West Side who is the father of a four-year-old—his office is in his apartment—said he is able to conduct a half-hour session with a patient over the telephone as long as his son is immobilized in a nearby room watching "Barney & Friends." The Barney people know this well. According to their Texas spokesperson, a Connecticut Public Television executive, a grandfather, said of the show, "The kids shut up for thirty minutes, and it works out good."

As for attempts at an interview, the spokesperson said emphatically that it was impossible: "We don't want children to be able to dissect Barney." When David E. Joyner, who plays the body of Barney, was asked about an interview, he demanded a notarized letter saying that he would be given the right to approve any story about Barney before its publication. He eventually agreed to be interviewed, but only if he would not be asked to talk as or about Barney. Between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, Mr. Joyner said, he was a Sunday-school teacher, the Sunday-school assistant superintendent, and the choir director of his church in Decatur, Illinois. He said that his parents, when he left his job and decided to be a full-time actor, told him, "You're a grown man, and if this is the decision you want to make we're behind you." He went on to say (and it's as far as he would go), "It's a true blessing to be in a position of this great magnitude."

Perhaps the Barney people are right to be overprotective. At around 4 P.M. on a Wednesday afternoon in April, a serenely good-natured mother of a four-year-old girl made a confession in mid-town Manhattan: "I bought the Barney book. I admit it. I read it to my daughter in the Barney voice. My husband looked at me with mistrust and dismay, but I did it." Her otherwise untroubled face became embarrassed, slightly guilt-ridden. She repeated slowly, "I read it to her in the Barney voice."

Did she hate herself?

"Yes," she said, and then, louder, and with a flicker of viciousness, "I wish I could shoot Barney." ♦

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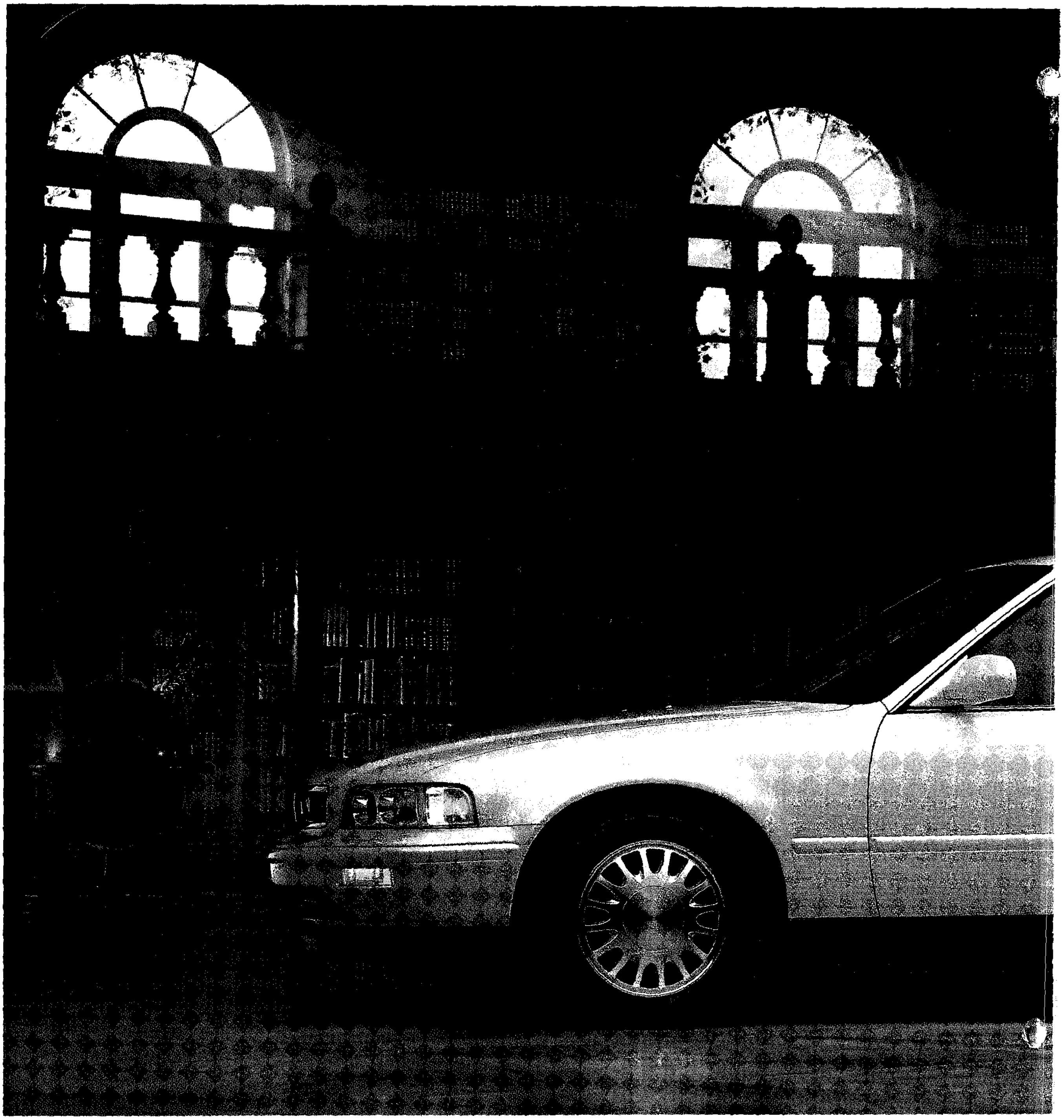

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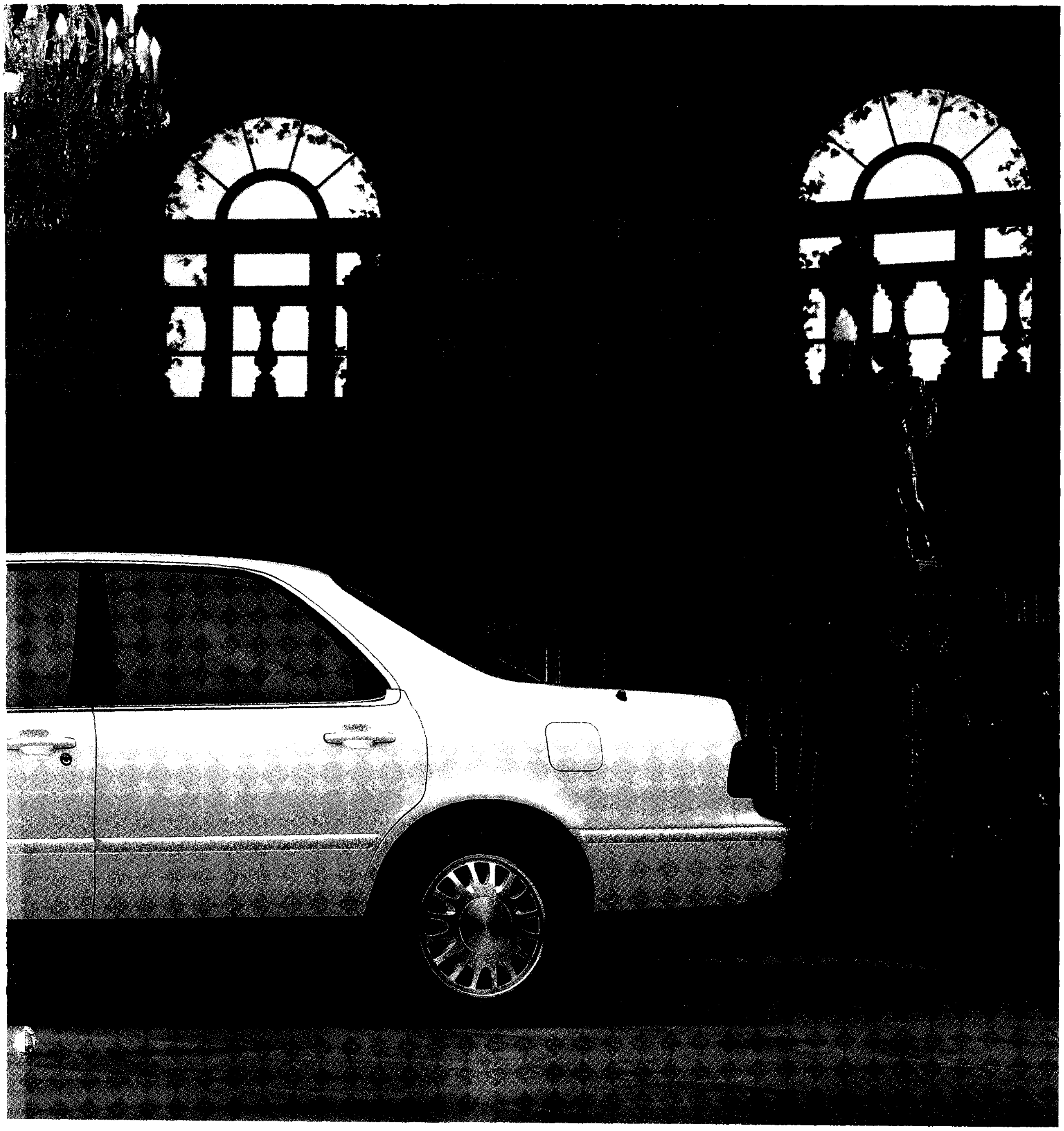

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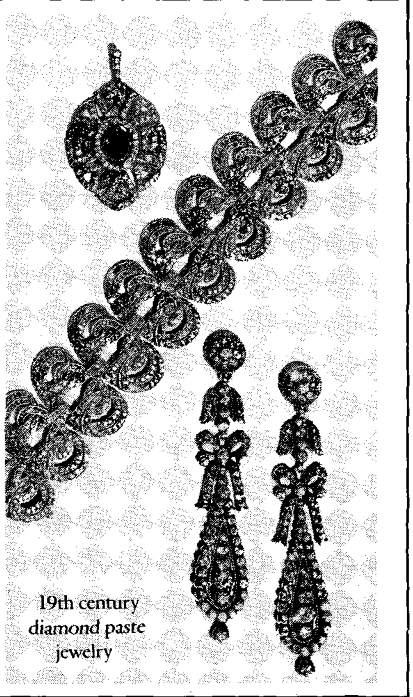

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

BOB DOLE'S FIRST STRIKE

Senator Dole gave way to perennial candidate Dole as he orchestrated Bill Clinton's defeat on the economic-stimulus bill and reëstablished himself as the G.O.P.'s key power.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

THE morning after last fall's election, Bob Dole told a good-news, bad-news joke, his favorite kind, about Bill Clinton. "The good news is he's getting a honeymoon in Washington," said the Senate Minority Leader. "The bad news is that Bob Dole is going to be his chaperon." The pattern of Dole's humor is unvarying: flat, clichéd opening followed by bleak, sardonic punch line. The jokes illuminate the joker. No one perceives the motives of politicians as unsentimentally as Dole does. This includes his own motives, of course. He reduces all politicians to their political essence. He wears his cynicism on his sleeve. His greatest strength is that he cannot be disillusioned. This is the man principally impeding Clinton's way.

GERARD NICOLAS

On Wednesday, April 21st, the President's package of proposals designed to stimulate the economy went down to defeat—blocked by a Republican filibuster in the Senate. Clinton's offer to compromise had not satisfied the opposition, which wanted only to see him fail. The fire and fumes from Waco overpowered the quieter finish of the standoff in Washington, but the political damage here will be more lasting.

The fight over the stimulus program came down to a fight between Clinton and Dole—a tension that will remain as a leitmotif of all legislative battles to come, from health care to campaign reform. Clinton's problem is that Dole is running for President—something he has done twice before. Ultimately, Dole may reconsider; after all, he will be seventy-three years old in 1996. For now, though, his every tic and gesture are aspects of a long campaign to enhance his power. What he most wants is not within Clinton's ability to give: the Republican Presidential nomination.

Dole is pulled between the desire for partisan power in the future and the desire for policy power in the present. In the past, he has been able to satisfy both impulses by making deals; in the Senate, only the dealmakers play in the big game. But, because of the trauma the Republican Party suffered during the Bush Presidency and the last campaign, compromise at this moment, when a new Democratic President is vulnerable, is viewed as nothing less than betrayal. The Senate Republican Conference has become a continuous primary for Dole. Within it lurk potential rivals for the G.O.P. nomination (Phil Gramm) and the Senate leadership (Trent Lott). These Southern and Western Republicans are the latest incarnation of the congressional conservatives who have obstructed reform since the New Deal. For the sake of his own power, Dole must constantly be vigilant about the minority entrenched within the minority; and to subdue them he must humiliate Clinton.

FOR Bob Dole, Clinton's election was bad news and good news. The bad news was that a Republican President was defeated; the good news was that that President was George Bush. Bush, as Dole pointed out when they ran against each other in 1988, was a fly-boy, one of the fighter pilots swooping to glory, while Dole, the foot soldier, "got shot," as he always puts it. Perhaps no one in American politics has a more acute sense of class grievance than the Kansas senator, whose family was forced to live in the basement of his childhood home so that the upstairs could be rented out. Nothing was easy for Dole. Languishing for three years in hospitals after being shattered by shrapnel in the Second World War, he built his own instruments of physical therapy. (A physical therapist at one of the hospitals became his first wife.) Every step of his ascent to the ornate office of the Republican leader and a luxury apartment in the Watergate has been earned. He lives with physical pain, buttoning his shirts every morning with difficulty. And pain is what he prescribes as the only remedy for the country's problems. He has said for years that "painful medicine" is the answer. "The hard things haven't happened to you yet. But they might," he warned a raucous rally for him in 1988, subduing it into an uncomfortable near-silence.

Upon once seeing a photograph of Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, and Richard Nixon together, Dole remarked, "See no evil, hear no evil—and evil." Yet Dole shared many of Nixon's characteristics: finely tuned resentments, a sense of politics as being about politics, and a position within the G.O.P. which was not that of any particular faction. In 1971, Nixon made Dole the chairman of the Republican National Committee. But after being reëlected in 1972 Nixon issued a ukase: "Dole—he must go." Nixon thought Dole both too transparently Nixonian and too irreverent. Now Nixon wished for a kinder and gentler face, wealth and breeding, an Ivy League credential—in short, George Bush. The exemplar of the Protestant ethic was thus pushed aside for his social better.

In 1976, President Ford selected Dole as his running mate. In 1980, Dole himself ran for President, and was beaten by Ford's intraparty rival, Ronald Reagan, who went on to name George Bush as his running mate: ashes twice. To Dole, Reagan was a dreamer, a utopian, not really serious. Reagan believed in the pursuit of happiness to the exclusion of all else, which was anathema to Dole. Dole saw Reagan's pleasure seeking in the embrace of the supply-side panacea. On this topic, Dole almost always tells the same joke: "There's good news and bad news," he begins. "The good news is that a bus filled with supply-siders drove off a cliff. The bad news is that there were two empty seats." But Dole, the Finance Committee chairman, was there to alter the President's original plan. In an effort to stanch Reagan's and then Bush's deficits, Dole helped engineer successive deals to increase taxes. Despite his dashed ambition, Dole was unfailingly loyal and supportive as Bush's Senate leader. When Bush lost, the last major Republican power was gone. Nixon and Ford, Reagan and Bush—now there were none. Only Dole had survived to act as a young President's chaperon.

After President Clinton unveiled his economic program before a joint session of Congress on February 17th, his popularity shot up and remained immovable for weeks. "It spiked and stayed there," Stan Greenberg, his pollster, said. But he now faced the obstacle that had stood in the path of reform for more than two generations: the conservative alliance of Republicans and Southern Democrats. As Clinton would discover, this was not a matter of antiquarian interest. When he entered the Oval Office as a reformer, he found it furnished with many of the same obligations, traps, and Byzantine rules that had bedevilled his predecessors. The past was not gone but mutated.

In 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to purge the Party of the Southern conservatives who had brought the New Deal to a halt. His abysmal failure left their power intact for more than a generation. Kennedy's brief Administration was frustrated by reactionary Southern committee chairmen, especially the venerable segregationist Representative Howard Smith, of Virginia, the chairman of the House Rules Committee, who had also played an obstructionist role against F.D.R. Kennedy never lived to test with a new electoral mandate the changes wrought in the House rules by progressive Democrats. That was left to Lyndon Johnson, the former Senate Majority Leader, who understood in his fingertips every nuance of congressional manipulation. The next Democratic President, Jimmy Carter, began with a Senate majority of sixty-one, but along with it disdain for and ignorance of Congress, as well as a baffling sense of priorities.

With Carter's defeat, Reagan reassembled the old conservative alliance. Republicans controlled the Senate and could dominate the House in coalition with about forty Southern Democrats, the so-called Boll Weevils. It was this configuration that passed his economic program, in 1981. But in the midterm election of 1982, when the Republicans lost twenty-six seats during a recession, the conservative alliance's hold on the House was profoundly shaken.

In the last Congress, the alliance materialized only half as often as it did in Reagan's first year, according to *Congressional Quarterly*. Part of the change was

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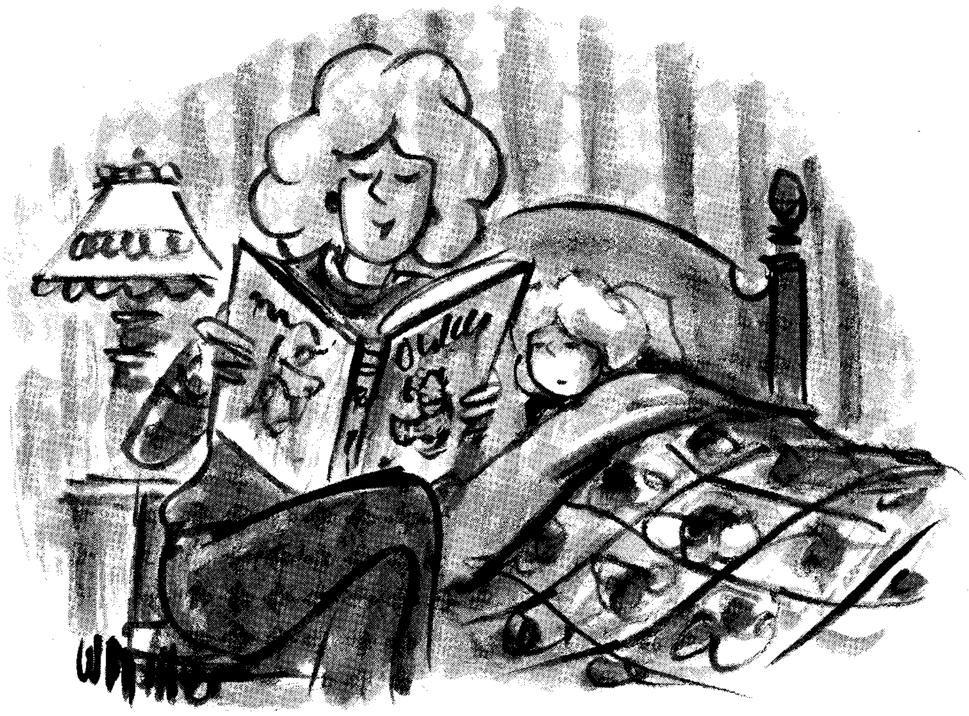

"She married and then divorced, and then she married and divorced, and then she married and lived happily ever after."

due to the migration of Southern conservatives into the G.O.P. Another part was due to the rise of Southern black Democrats; in the current House, they hold seventeen seats, compared with just five in the last Congress. For the conservative alliance to emerge now, almost two-thirds of the white Southern Democrats would have to vote with the Republicans, as opposed to just over half last year. These numbers undergird the possibility of Clinton's advances.

On the day the President delivered his economic speech to Congress, he invited a group of legislators, Democrats and Republicans, to the White House. Representative Richard Armey, of Texas, took the opportunity to inform Clinton that he would fail and be a one-term President. "Of course, that doesn't bother me, Mr. President," Armey concluded. ("He seemed a little taken aback," Armey recalls.) With his posturing, he established the continuity of the Republican approach in the House: the politics of ruin.

Representative Charlie Stenholm, Democrat of Texas, voiced the sentiment that there was "no possibility for bipartisan action." In 1980, Stenholm had organized the Conservative Democratic Forum—the Boll Weevils, who had enabled Reagan to pass his program. By 1989, Stenholm had become disillusioned with the Reagan policies and was appointed a deputy whip, co-opted at last. This time, the leadership worked closely with him as it agreed to sixty-three billion dollars in additional cuts. But on the sixteen-billion-dollar stimulus package, which he tried to slash, Stenholm overplayed his limited hand.

The House Democrats were determined to hand Clinton victories. The whip operation worked with high efficiency, backed for the first time in twelve years by the White House. The number of deputy whips was more than doubled, to ten, and the group met three or four times a day. Every Democrat met with the President, and he made follow-up calls. "There never were too many problems," said Representative Butler Derrick, of South Carolina, who was in charge of the whip task force. The rules were tightly controlled, restricting amendments and setting a limit on debate. When the vote was taken on the stimulus package, an effort by Stenholm to cut twelve billion dollars was soundly defeated. "I can't say this was the hardest sell we ever had," said Representative David Bonior, of Michigan, the Democratic Whip.

The conservative alliance failed to materialize; the equilibrium in the House was tilted more sharply against it than ever. Members of Stenholm's small group were no longer even proper Boll Weevils but, rather, conservative Democrats from various regions who were obsessed with the deficit. And if Stenholm was now estranged from the Republicans and reconciled to his position with the Democrats, the Republicans were dismissive of him. "Our hopes for Stenholm have been dashed so many times," said Tony Blankley, press secretary for Representative Newt Gingrich, leader of the House right-wingers, whom Democrats call "the Hezbollah." "Stenholm constantly looks for fig leaves, and caves at the last minute. We've given up. He ends up cutting deals with his leadership. He's been publicly humiliated." What had made Reaganism possible in the beginning was now in pieces—at least, in the House. But the movement of economic bills to the Senate meant a shift in dynamics, personalities, and, not incidentally, rules.

When a Republican was President, the Senate Republicans needed just thirty-four votes to sustain a veto and thus thwart the Democratic majority. Without the White House, they had to have forty-one votes—the number needed to reject a motion of cloture against a filibuster. If they maintained unity in their ranks, they could brandish the filibuster with stultifying effect against Clinton, for there were forty-three Republicans. That number, by the way, made the most of their true political support. The Senate, of course, was designed to be unrepresentative; it incorporates the principle of the equality of states, not the equality of citizens. The forty-three Republicans do not represent forty-three per cent of the people. Because they are clustered in the smaller states, the Senate Republicans represent less than a third of the population.

In March, the Republicans unsheathed the filibuster weapon against the motor-voter bill, which would have allowed citizens to register to vote at a number of government sites, including motor-vehicle-registration and welfare offices. The Republicans agreed to lift their filibuster only when welfare offices were stricken from the law's provisions. The G.O.P. success on motor voter was a harbinger.

Although the Boll Weevils had shrivelled in the House, a successor generation had surfaced in the Senate, and was now enclosed within the G.O.P. Their leaders were former House members, imbued with a militant minoritarianism, who had got themselves elected to the upper body: Phil Gramm, of Texas; Thad Cochran and Trent Lott, of Mississippi; Connie Mack, of Florida. (Don Nickles, the firebrand chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, was a former Oklahoma state senator.) Gramm, the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee—the Party's campaign arm—was the most prominent of the original Boll Weevils, a conservative Democrat with an economics degree from the University of Georgia, and a co-sponsor of Reagan's economic program. He switched parties in 1983, won his House seat again as a Republican, and in 1984 was elected to the Senate. Gramm is, by turns, pedantic and pugnacious, and is almost always overbearing. His manner was apparent in his keynote speech at the self-destructive Republican Convention in Houston, when he led the delegates in chanting: "No! No! No!" The Reagan smile was wiped away.

Gramm's proximity to large reservoirs of Texas money recommended him to his colleagues to run the N.R.S.C., but his heavy-handedness annoyed many of them. They were aware that he was using his position, travelling the country making contacts within the Party and among fund-raisers, to run for President in 1996. To them, his interest seemed to take precedence over theirs. No one was more affronted by Gramm's ambition than Bob Dole. The two were on a collision course. Gramm threatened both Dole's authority in the Senate and his Presidential prospects. Last November, Dole threw his weight behind Senator Mitch McConnell in his run against Gramm to head the campaign committee. Gramm, still controlling the purse strings of the favor bank, held on by only one vote. Dole also opposed, fruitlessly, the elevation of Trent Lott to secretary of the Senate Republican Conference. The ascendancy of the Southern conservatives had shifted the center of gravity among the Senate Republicans. They were formidable not only in terms of numbers but also as an ideological force, believing that Reaganism needed only to be tried once more to prove that it really worked. They were a tactical machine, importing techniques of total warfare from the House. And they had become an institutional force, running the key Senate Republican groups.

At the same time, the more moderate Senate Republicans, from the larger Midwestern and Eastern states, had fallen into a funk, a kind of existential crisis. If a determined Democratic President could rely on a united Democratic Senate, where did these Republicans on the margins fit in? For the first time in their careers, they were out of the play. Some of these moderates, such as John Chafee, of Rhode Island, and John Danforth, of Missouri, also happened to be wealthy patricians. The idea of their possible irrelevance struck them as an impertinence. "We feel that there in the Republican ranks there are thoughtful individuals who should not be disregarded," Chafee explained. "The Administration is making a big mistake charging ahead without giving consideration to the views of those individuals. We've come to realize that, absent sticking together, we won't amount to any-

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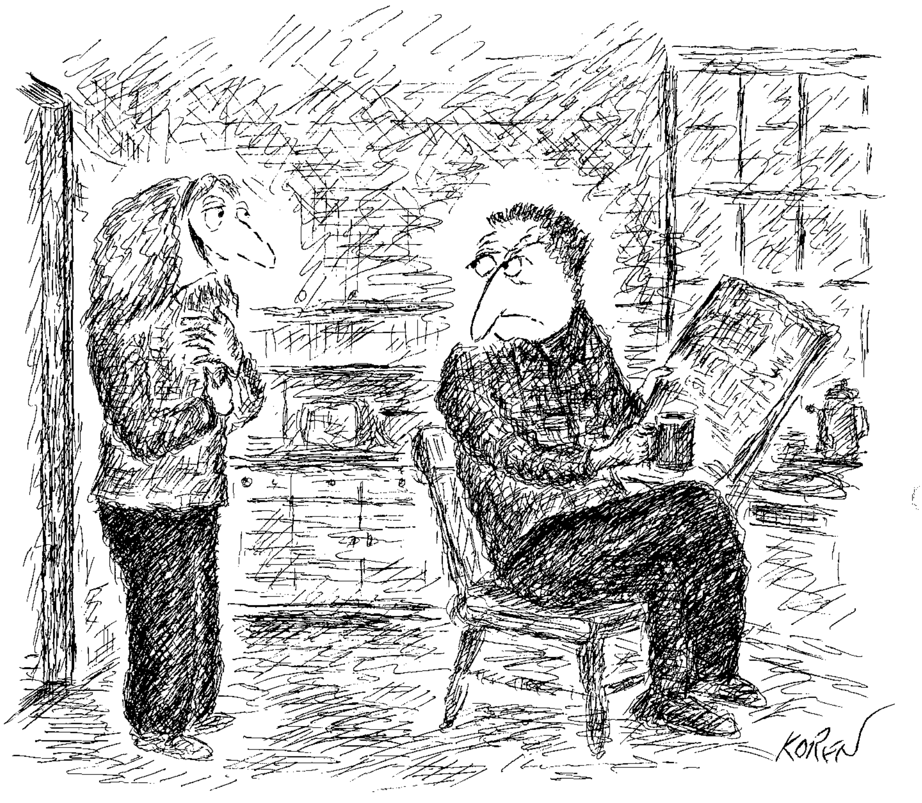
thing." Danforth, who has announced that he will retire from Congress after this term, said, "I don't want to spend the last year and a half in the Senate opposing the President. If you want a centrist position, come to us, give us a try. That's not what's happened so far. It's as though we were the Republican Party in the Arkansas legislature." Within the Republican council, it was Danforth and Chafee who made the most emphatic case for opposing Clinton's program.

Dole now had not only to maneuver against a Democratic President and Senate but to direct the swirling currents of the Republicans. "Got to get back to the Senate," he told the National Press Foundation dinner on February 25th. "Got to defend the Republican position. If I knew what it was." The joke was no joke. Dole's position was that the Republicans should have no affirmative program. His intention was to unite his ranks and consolidate his leadership by throwing Clinton on the defensive. An equation in which all variables are purely political is to Dole a beautiful construct. "We're told that people don't want gridlock anymore," he told the National Newspaper Association on March 11th. "Now, in my view gridlock is a bad thing unless you're against something. And then you'd better hope there *is* a little gridlock in Congress. There's always been a little gridlock. In fact, our Founding Fathers arranged it so there would be a little gridlock. In fact, the Senate is the most deliberative body in the world."

Dole is nothing if not a man of the Senate. But, quietly, he has also been trying to bring an outside factor to bear: Ross Perot. (Kansas was among Perot's best states; he won twenty-seven per cent of the vote there.) Since the election, Dole has assiduously courted Perot in fairly regular phone calls. "I talk to him off and on," Dole said. "I'm just trying to say, 'You just keep the Republicans in mind when you're looking for solutions.' He's been very friendly." Though Perot campaigned for substantial tax increases, the billionaire complains in private "that there are just too much taxes," according to Dole.

By the time the budget resolution reached the Senate Budget Committee, the Republican position was thoroughly hardened. Jim Sasser, the committee chairman, kept the Democrats in line as the Republicans offered thirty-four amendments intended to eviscerate Clinton's program. "They constructed as many amendments in com-



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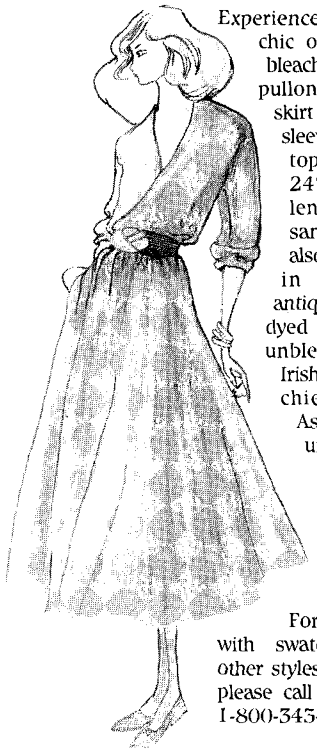
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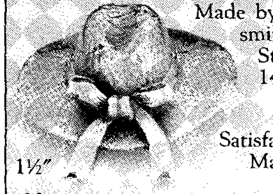
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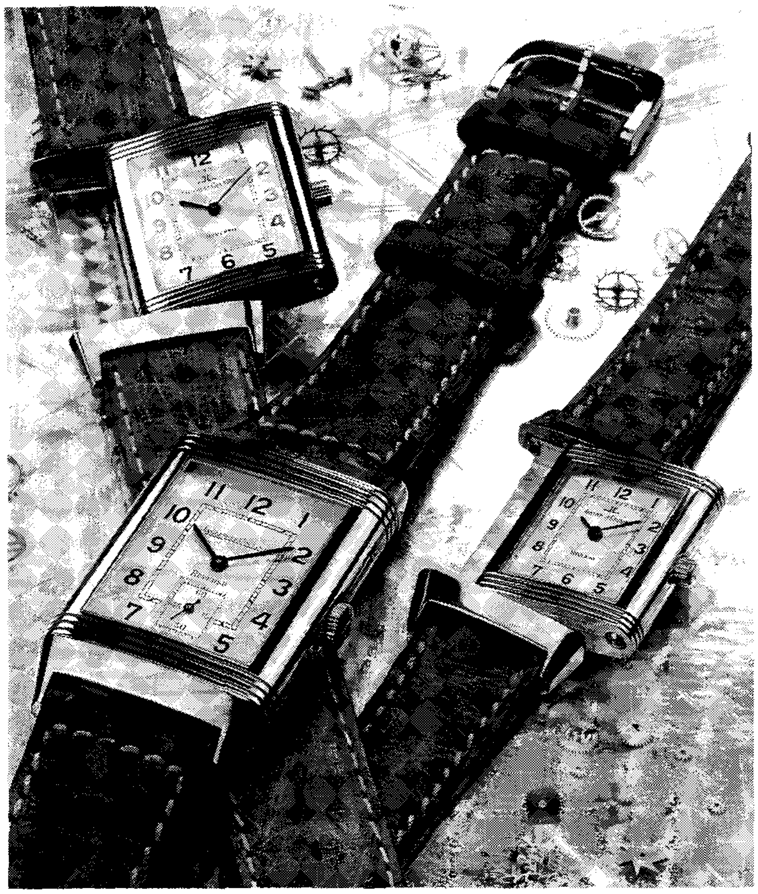
mittee to cause as much pain as possible," a Senate Democratic staffer said. "It was a brutally partisan exercise." None of the amendments passed. Then the resolution went to the floor. The Republicans offered twenty-two more amendments. None passed.

The same day, Clinton's stimulus package went to the floor. But the rules under which it was considered were radically different. On budget resolutions and final reconciliation, there are time limits on debate; these cannot be filibustered. On the stimulus, however, the Republicans had their chance.

The Administration's rationale for the bill was that deficit reduction was likely to induce an economic contraction. By providing a small but sufficient stimulus before any cuts took effect, the economy could be protected from slipping into recession. The Republicans saw the stimulus bill as needless, and maintained that the economy was best left to its own devices. They saw an opportunity to tar Clinton as a conventional "tax and spend" Democrat, to depict federal spending for the cities (overwhelmingly Democratic) as "pork," and to dim the glow of success surrounding the energetic young President. "Now we have something that identifies us," Danforth said.

The rules empowered the minority. The Senate now enacted scenes of parliamentary foibles from an undiscovered Trollope novel. "The subplots are enormous," a White House official said. "This is less about this bill than about the subplots." As the Republicans launched their filibuster, the silver-maned Senator Robert Byrd, Democrat of West Virginia and the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, took the floor to defend the stimulus in a stentorian voice and with a sweeping, if slightly tremulous, hand. Byrd, accomplished in the intricacies of the rules, set up a form of "amendment tree"—in this case, a device that makes defeating amendments easy by making the vote on the last in a series of amendments binding on the whole series. (Dole had employed amendment trees when it suited his purpose.) "I told the President what I was going to do, and the Majority Leader, before I did it," Byrd said. "They had no problem with it. I protected the bill." He did so with florid, Chautauqua-style orations full of references to Cicero and the Corin-



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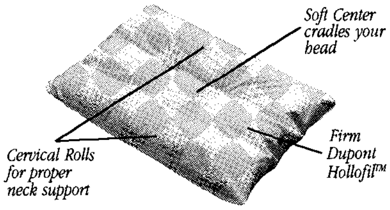
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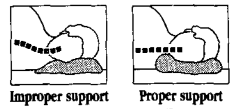

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thians. For days Byrd held forth, making himself a convenient target for the Republicans, who blamed their own filibuster on Byrd's speechifying. But the decision to filibuster preceded Byrd's performance. The Republicans' solidarity on the stimulus, moreover, paralleled that against the budget, which had required no Byrd. "Byrdlock" was paralyzing the Senate, wrote Evans and Novak, the conservative columnists. But Danforth admitted, "It didn't make any difference."

The White House, meanwhile, received private signals from the Republican leadership that its alternative program might soon be forthcoming. Byrd's gambit, though obnoxious, might just work. A White House official said, "We had a reasonable expectation that at some point they would turn and say, 'Here's what we want,' and there would be an ensuing negotiation. It was said more than once among the senators, 'We'll have a proposal in the morning.' The implication always was that there would be an initiative to get something done. It never came to pass. The miscalculation that was made was that there would be an opportunity to react to a proposal from the other side."

Had Clinton, then, left the fate of his bill in the hands of one person—Bob Dole? "That's right," Dole said later. For Dole the choice was between appearing to concede to the Democratic President and using the filibuster as a proto-primary to reinforce his position as the Republican leader. By holding the Republicans together through the mechanism of simply making nothing happen, Dole could trump Gramm.

Perot, Dole's phone mate, jumped in, too. "Do the Republicans have any other option?" he said of the gridlock. "I guess they're doing it because it's the only way to prevent money from being spent that the American people don't want spent."

CLINTON had promised to concentrate on the economy like "a laser." But the President was inundated with his own new agendas. Just as the debate on the stimulus was joined, he left Washington for the forest summit, and then he moved on to the summit with the Russian leader Boris Yeltsin. By the time Clinton returned, the Senate was adjourning for the Easter recess, still deadlocked by the filibuster. On the stimulus bill, he stumbled from tactic to tactic, lambasting the Republicans for neglecting children one day, offering a compromise the next. "I wish he'd slow down a little bit and focus on one or two things. I think he's losing some support," Dole said mordantly. Though the public supported Clinton's stimulus by a sixty-five-per-cent margin (according to a *Newsweek*-Gallup poll), the legislative wear and tear had reduced backing for his economic plan to forty-nine per cent (according to a private poll commissioned by the Republican National Committee).

But Clinton lost more than a bill. Its defeat disclosed the loss of his ideological momentum. When the Congressional Budget Office told the President-Elect that the deficit was much higher than had been acknowledged under Bush, deficit reduction became a mania overriding Clinton's concern for public investment. When the issue of the deficit becomes sacred, the Republicans can cast any program as an indulgence in profane "pork." And Perot can continue to cue his volatile followers.

For Clinton, deficit reduction is the means, not the end. His frustration on the stimulus reveals a more profound impasse for his Administration. So far, he has not succeeded in imposing his definitions on the debate. Lacking control of the rhetoric, the President may spend his term merely attempting to cope with Reagan's insolvent legacy, a politics of interminable compensation.

"AT first I intended to become a student of the Senate rules and I did learn much about them, but I soon found that the Senate had but one fixed rule . . . which was to the effect that the Senate would do anything it wanted to do whenever it wanted to do it. When I had learned that, I did not waste much time on the other rules, because they were so seldom applied." This statement was made by President Calvin Coolidge, and it is cited in the autobiography of Bob Dole.

During the Easter recess, Dole travelled to Iowa and New Hampshire. "I'm still the President of Iowa," he said, recalling his 1988 victory over George Bush in the caucuses there. He added that during the recess Phil Gramm had also explored these two states. "But," Dole noted, "it's only 1993." ♦

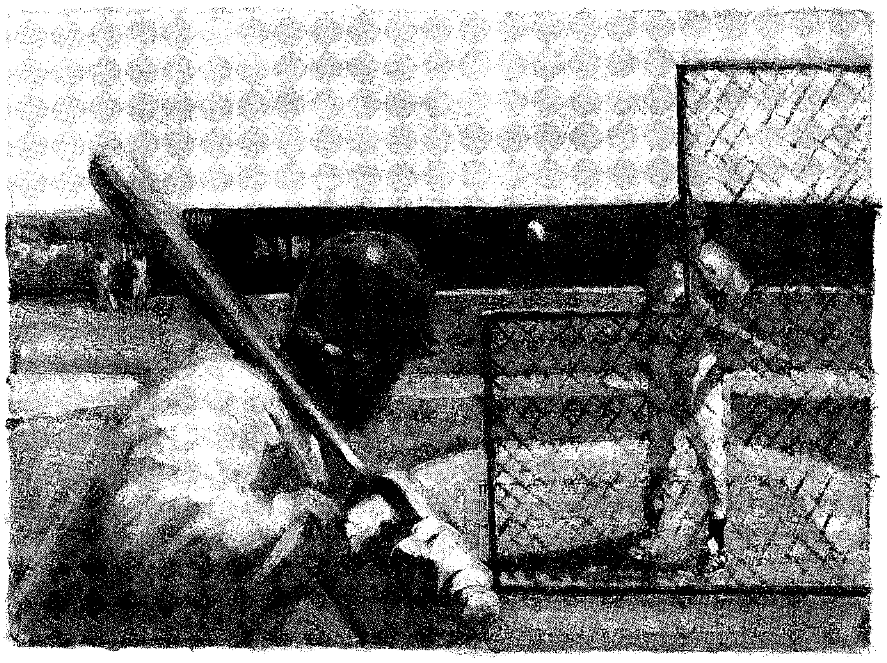
THE SPORTING SCENE

PUT ME IN, COACH

Baseball's tangled money and management woes have become as familiar as the seventh-inning stretch, but if you listen to the coaches and older players, the real news about the game is what's been happening out on the field.

BY ROGER ANGELL

BIG-LEAGUE baseball, to hear Merv Rettenmund talk, used to be a lot less interesting. "I broke in with the old Orioles at the end of the sixties," he said one morning in Arizona. "And by the time I'd made it up to that level I'd been in the Baltimore system for four years, and I really knew the game. We were a boring club to watch, because on the routine plays—the cutoffs, the relays, the rundowns—everyone did it right. No exceptions. Nowadays, the routine infield pop-up is no longer routine on some occasions—it's an adventure. With free agency and with players moving around so much now, you have two or three regulars on your club each year who are new faces, and you have to start again from scratch. In some places, the only way management can keep costs down is to bring up kids, and sometimes you do that too fast. You work on fundamentals every day in the spring, even at this level, because the big leagues have become a developmental league. The old days are gone. On that Baltimore organization, there might be one roster change each season. The club was winning a hundred games, year after year, and spring training was more a question of going out there and getting prepared for the World Series."



RICHARD SPARKS

Rettenmund will turn fifty this year, but he doesn't look all that different from our first impressions of him when he arrived in the American League, in 1968, as a midsized, thick-bodied outfielder and deadly line-drive hitter with Earl Weaver's Orioles; we'd been hearing scary reports about him for years, it seemed, from the Orioles' Triple-A Rochester Red Wings. He played thirteen years in the bigs, with six Championship Series and four World Series along the way. He is still in uniform, as hitting coach with the San Diego Padres, and the change in him you notice most might be the high-style sunglasses he wears now. He has been teaching hitting almost as long as he practiced it—with the Angels, the Rangers, and the Athletics, before moving over to the Padres three years ago. Listening to him in Arizona this spring and last, I had the notion that he remembered the old days in baseball but without longing. His conversation switched from then to now and back again, and he was at pains that I would not leap to any easy conclusions along the way. "Today's established players work much harder than guys did in the old days, and they listen more," he said at one point. "Work habits are wonderful now. You can't find a guy who works harder than a Tony Gwynn, a Rickey Henderson. Players like Fred McGriff, Jose Canseco, Paul Molitor—they're never not working, they stay later than anybody. There's a big misconception about this, I think."

But when our conversation got around to lesser players—say, batters who were expected to have mastered specific skills in order to make up for less evident talent—Rettenmund admitted that there were some contemporary deficiencies. "Down in the bottom of the order, the job description is handling the bat," he said. "And once again there are some jobs that are going to be lost in the major leagues because there'll be some guy who can hit but he can't play the game."

Baserunning has declined as well, he thought, in spite of the quickness of modern players and the vastly increased number of bases stolen. "Earl Weaver was a hard man, and he always let you know how he wanted things done," he went on. "He said to do the job right or he'd get somebody else—and you could *do* that in those days. One of the things he insisted on was that you not get doubled off base on a caught line drive. That's a tough situation, but Earl would simply not accept excuses. Every time you got on first base with one out or no outs, you had that in mind and thought about it. It was even harder on our fast guys, like Al Bumbry and Paul Blair—real aggressive base runners—but they knew what to do. If you watch baseball today, you'll see base runners get doubled off first over and over again. It's like they think nothing can be done about it." He paused for a moment—a good coach always waits to see if a prospect knows a little something—and when I shook my head he explained. "You have to read it off the bat. You watch the pitch. If it's going to be high in the strike zone, you're in business—when that ball comes off the bat six to eight feet high, you can be running. If there's a low pitch, down in the strike zone, more than likely it's going to be a low line drive or a ground ball, so you know to hold on, ease up to protect yourself. If you're concentrating on that strike zone, you can usually read it right. But it takes years and years to learn that skill, and it still isn't easy. We coaches can talk about it and talk about it, but some players will never know what they're doing when they get on base."

ANOTHER major-league season, fresh text to the old book that Rettenmund was talking, is here, already fulfilling its traditional functions as a season harbinger and as promise that the endless winter-sport schedules will come to a close someday—well, some *month*—soon. Once again, baseball instantly showed us its appetite for surprise, when the Indians' slugger Carlos Baerga, in a game against the Yankees, knocked two home runs in the same inning from opposite sides of the plate; no one in the majors had ever done *that* before. But the fresh season has been most welcome of all as a perfect and ironic distraction from the gnarled difficulties and accumulating doubts afflicting baseball itself. Some of the sport's intractable problems have hung around for so long that their history and esoteric workings are now as familiar to us fans as the principles of the hit-and-run play, albeit without the fun. A spring checklist of baseball's chronic or worsening ailments would find the same old management-labor pangs, the revenue-sharing blockage, the television-money collywobbles, the free-agent and salary-escalation syndrome, the ever-rising salary-arbitration readings, the low-grade discriminatory-hiring infection (with the ugly flareup of the Marge Schott affair), and so forth. None of these need be further addressed now, but the bad news does not stop there. A serious decline in fan interest, particularly among the younger sectors of the audience, is at last being openly discussed, along with baseball's shortage of star performers at the topmost, Nike-commercial levels of the sport and the equally distressing diminishment of talent at the rookie stage. In addition, we have lately been seeing what one might call the Balkanization of baseball, as evidenced by the arrival of the expansion-team Florida Marlins and Colorado Rockies in the National League this year; the midwinter scramblings and finaglings over the removal and last-minute restoration of the ancient Giants franchise, from San Francisco to St. Petersburg and back again; and the recently announced and apparently unalterable plan to reconfigure the leagues into three divisions instead of two, with an accompanying new, third tier of post-season championship games, which will require the admission of an inferior, "wild card" fourth team to each playoff. The done deal is being trumpeted by the owners as a surefire cure for September doldrums, but in the minds of many fans, of course, it is a gimmick that signals the demise of regular-season play as a worthy object of our day-to-day attention during baseball's long summer. Lastly, but not separately from any of the above, one must note the unspoken refusal of the owners to select a new commissioner to succeed the departed Fay Vincent, whom they fired eight months ago, for more or less the same reasons that now keep them from replacing him: because they wish to remain distant from the media and the fans, accountable to no one but themselves.

With or without a commissioner, these deadweight issues and slipshod resolutions feel infinitely far removed from the game itself, which is where we fans might better direct our gaze, if we don't want to find ourselves simply giving up on baseball. With this in mind, I decided last year and this to sign myself up for some remedial baseball coaching and listening. I was impelled in this direction by a feeling that had been growing on me over the past several summers that there were plenty of other things amiss in baseball—things I could see plainly, out there on the field. The game was changing in small ways, and mostly for the worse. It wasn't the tactics or the hitting or the pitching—not in particular, I mean. I couldn't quite prove it with statistics, or necessarily find it in a single game, or two or three games, but it was clear to me that major-league baseball was no longer being played at its old rigorous and imperial best—at a level that seemed to eliminate carelessness and faulty execution and faulty thinking. It was losing the everyday dramatic tautness that had once prevailed: the expectation that almost perfect baseball would be played, inning after inning, and that winning a game would therefore require something exceptional to happen out there—a succession of stifling infield plays; a huge strikeout or an induced pop-up in the right place; a throw to an unexpected base which allowed a run to score but assassinated a big inning; a stroked single

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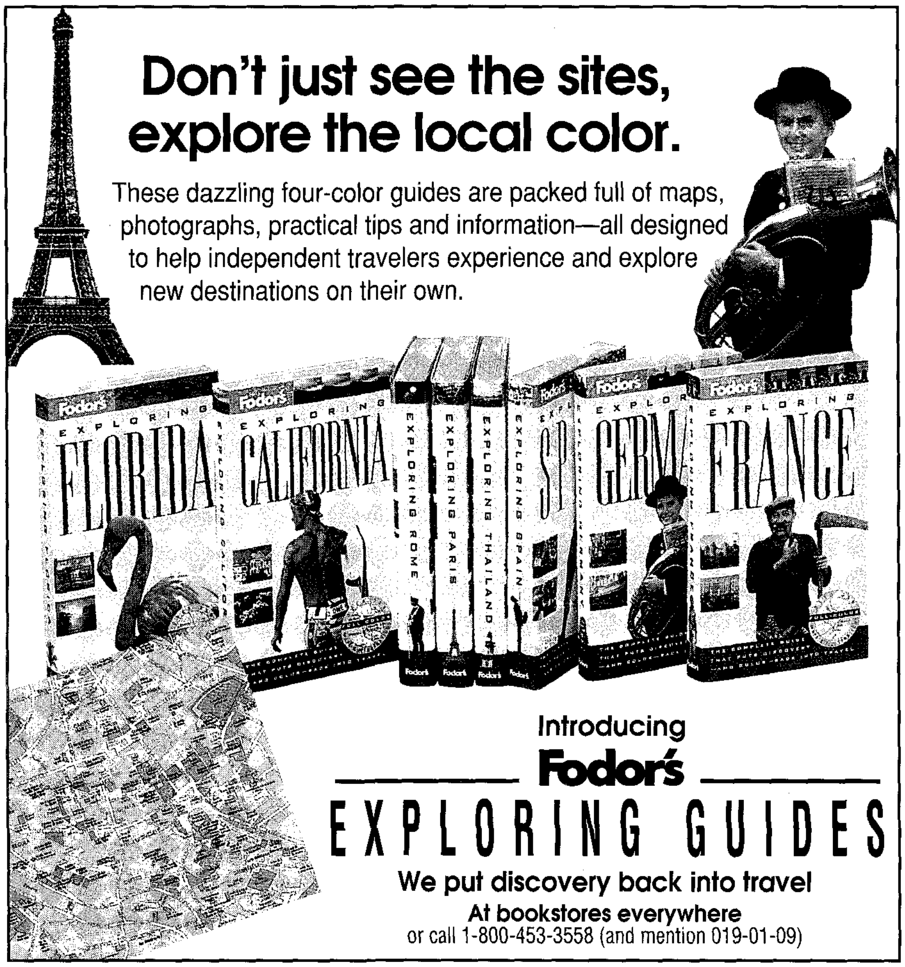
to the opposite field, off a tough pitch from a tough, knowing hurler. These were the moments you could look back on later that evening, or the next day, thinking, *That was the ballgame.* Everyday good baseball was important because the central emotion of the game was satisfaction. The thrills would come along in due course, almost on their own; what mattered was playing the game right—playing the way Merv Rettenmund talked about.

Too often now, the games I go to are not played well. I am not alone in this feeling, of course: among my friends and fellow-fans, griping about slovenly or mindless big-league ball has grown to such insistent levels in recent years that it's like a locust chorus in full summer, which one notices only when it stops. What we have seen much of is a lead-off man who doesn't want to win a base on balls; a batter in the three or four slot who is too impatient to try to work the count his way; and a fifth or sixth man in the order who will strike out, looking, twice in succession on exactly the same three-and-two slider, thrown by the same pitcher to the same corner of the plate, and will then walk back to the dugout without the smallest visible sign of concern. I am tired of seeing a well-paid six-year man once again swing from his heels (the one I have in mind bats right-handed), with a teammate on second late in a tied game, and hit a fly ball to left field instead of to right, with zero ensuing effect on the game. I'm almost startled when I notice a batter who can actually foul off a pitch that is too much for him—foul it off on purpose, I mean. I am weary of the extempore bunt attempt that means nothing, and simply passes the burden of the inning to the next man coming up to bat; and I'm even more burned up about the talented batter (this one—hint, hint—switches, and recently changed teams for the third time in three years) twice butchering an essential bunt during an at-bat and then cheering up, almost grinning, because now he is free to swing away, as was not needed.

Many fans I hear from blame these shortcomings on the inflated player salaries (the average major-league stipend is a million one hundred thousand dollars these days) and on an arbitration system that can double a player's salary after a glaringly mediocre season. They don't have to play well anymore, the complaint



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NEW ORLEANS

goes, and so they don't even try. I understand these feelings, because I have shared them at times, but I'm far from certain that money has a great deal to do with most of what goes on out on the field. And if fans are aware of a decline in skills and desire in today's game, then the clubs themselves, one must conclude, know it much better and must worry about it ceaselessly, because the financial stakes for them are so high. For evidence of this, one need go no farther than the increased attention given to coaching in the modern game. Coaches are better paid than they were even five years ago, with some of them at the major-league level now pulling down six-figure salaries. A couple of managers, Tom Lasorda and Tony La Russa, have reached the million-dollar range. Old-time coaches had the job stability and distinguished anonymity of tenured faculty members; Frankie Crosetti spent twenty-two years in the third-base box for the Yankees, patting pin-striped rumps as they rounded his corner after another Bronxian thunderclap. Modern-day coaches become celebrated and sought-after when their team has had some success; four coaches or mentor-players who served on La Russa's Oakland staff—Jim Lefebvre, Rene Lachemann, Don Baylor, and Dusty Baker—are current managers, and another coach, Ron Schueler, is in charge of major-league operations for the White Sox.

There are more coaches than there used to be, at every level of the game, and they are younger and more articulate than their predecessors; some of them have graduate degrees, and many more have had motivational training. Without exception, they regard the work as a profession, rather than simply a means of hanging on in baseball, as was once the case. Friendship still comes into play when a manager selects his coaching staff—skipper-loyalty is a prime consideration, everyone agrees—but capability outweighs palship. The deep-chested local monuments who stood at the corners of the diamond year after year (and sat beside the manager in the hotel bar every night) have gone the way of the straw suitcase.

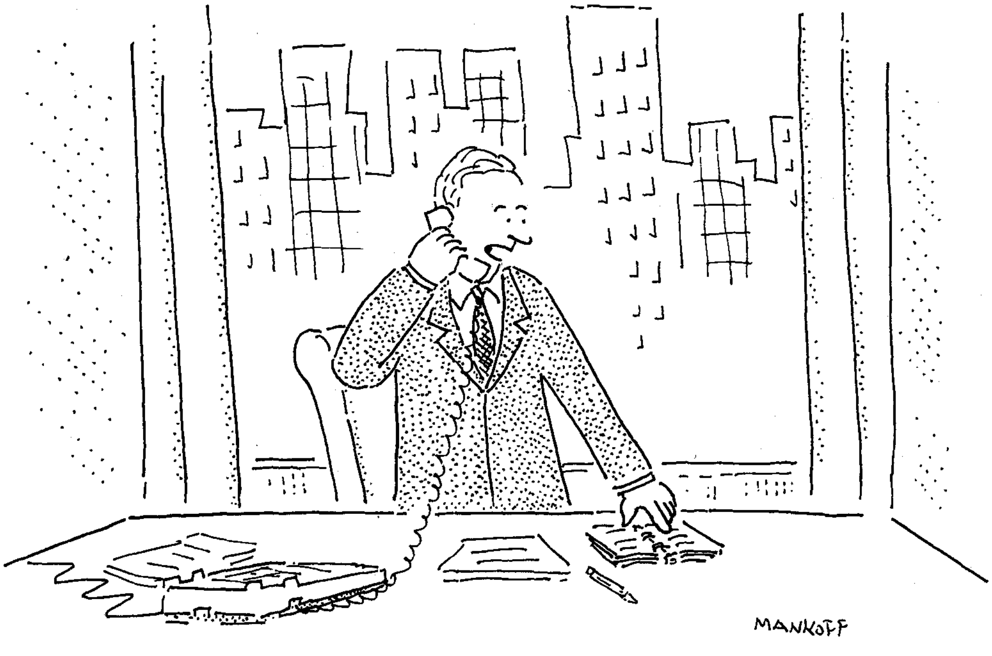
Contemporary coaches use contemporary tools—for instance, video libraries of every at-bat by every player on the team, cross-referenced by pitcher and situation. Rene Lachemann, who is managing the newborn Florida Marlins, compiled a celebrated personal Smithsonian of tapes as a coach with the Athletics and the Red Sox over the past decade and while managing the Brewers and the Mariners before that. Larry Hisle, the batting coach for the World Champion Toronto Blue Jays, is a computer hacker who can present each batter in his lineup with a pregame printout showing his prior tendencies and situation performances against today's starting sinker-slider right-hander with the visiting team.

Stats and tactics are always alluring, but knowing what coaches are trying to teach these days may be a more useful way of keeping up with what's going on. With that in mind, I made an effort last year not to be wholly distracted by the standings and the daily rush of game news, by super-statistics and celebrity performers; instead, I hung around coaches and managers (who are head coaches, after all) and some older active players—a couple of dozen of them, in the end—most of last spring and this spring, and in parts of last season as well, asking questions and trying to find out what *they* thought of the state of the game. All of them, of course, had been young players once themselves, and their concerns about the high level and perhaps the ultimate survival of high-quality baseball, I kept finding, ran as deep as my own. Deeper.

"IN the old days, managers never got to the park early," Johnny Pesky said. "You had a pitching coach and a batting coach in the minors, and that was it. They were more workers than teachers. They put you out there and left you alone. We had those leagues to work in—the D-leagues, the Cs, the Bs, the As, the double As, and the triple As—and you went one league at a time."

Pesky, I should add, is more totem than coach these days: he is seventy-three, with a lifework tan, a needle nose, and gleaming, pinpoint eyes, but, trim in his snowy Red Sox uniform, he still looks ready to play. He is at the Sox camp in Florida every day in the spring, and although there is always a bat in his hands, you sense that he is there as exemplar—a shiny vintage-car exhibit to give the rookies and the regulars a look at baseball history, since it is a subject about which many of them appear wholly ignorant.

"In those days, you always looked for other players to model yourself after," Pesky said one morning. "Johnny Frederick—he's the one who hit six pinch-hit home runs one year—came out of the majors and back to the Pacific Coast League and was a great hitter there. I saw him when I was a kid, and tried to change myself to be a little like him. Later on, when I'd begun to play, Heinie Manush, the Hall of Famer, spotted me in a pepper game one day and called me over. He told me I was just a little guy, so I'd have to stand up a bit closer in the box and choke up a little more. He said, 'Look, those guys are go-



"No, Thursday's out. How about never—is never good for you?"

ing to knock the bat out of your hands, so let's just give this a try.' He convinced me, and I had a great year. Rocky Mount, North Carolina, in the old Piedmont League—it must have been 1940."

Pesky didn't make it to Fenway Park until his eighth year in organized ball, but it could be argued that he was ready. His rookie-year two hundred and five hits led the American League in 1942, but he always discounts the feat by pointing out that he was hitting just ahead of Ted Williams in the Red Sox lineup. "We had advantages then," he said to me. "Now we have all this coaching instead, and it's needed, because these kids come up so fast—a year, two years in the system, for some of them—that they haven't had the experience. Me, I'd still like to see an infielder or an outfielder play about three hundred games and *then* maybe take a step up."

John Wathan is thirty years younger than Pesky but came along in baseball in almost exactly the same manner, putting in six years in the minors (San Jose, Waterloo, Omaha, Jacksonville) before he matriculated, in 1976, as a catcher and sometime first baseman with the Royals; he played ten years in Kansas City, melding almost imperceptibly into a coach at the end, as smart catchers often seem to do, and then managed the club for five years. He is bench coach with the Angels now, after filling in as skipper again last year, when their manager, Buck Rodgers, was severely injured in a team bus crash.

"You have no idea how much instruction goes on at the major-league level now," Wathan told me in Tempe this year. "Kids are short on bunting, on hitting the cutoff man, reading a pitcher's moves when they're on base, moving a guy from second to third with no outs, when to hit away, when not to hit away—all that stuff."

Wathan said that when he made it onto the Royals' roster it was before the era of team motivational meetings. "Now all of us are working on kids' heads as well as their mechanics. You need to keep them positive all the time—I'm a firm believer in that. Players used to be self-motivated, but now— You'd almost believe it would be the other way around, but I've heard players who are making millions complain that they're not appreciated."

He recalled that managers had more authority in the old days. "Everyone knew that if you screwed up, or didn't play hard when they put you out there, you'd be back on the bench or out of there," he said. "He had that hammer."

Roger Craig is back on his horse ranch in Southern California these days, having stepped down as the Giants manager when the club was sold this winter. Last spring, in his dugout in Scottsdale, he told me that when he pitched in the Dodger system as a young man he'd had some managers who never spoke a word to him from the first day of the season to the last. Not a word of conversation, that is. "What they did was chew your ass all the time," he said. "You do that now, and the player will call his agent. It just makes everything worse. Now you've got to talk to all your players every single day. They've got to be stroked more. Maybe they're less mature, but mostly they're just different."

Craig, like Johnny Pesky, came up in the game during baseball's peak years—there were fifty-nine minor leagues in the late nineteen-forties, and perhaps ten thousand professional players in all—but I couldn't pick up any sounds of resentment or resignation when he talked about the new order of things in the clubhouse. "Players used to get paid for what they did. Now they get paid by a system," he said. "They may have that multiyear contract. They may be younger, and some of them may have less talent, but you still have to try to reach them. It's a real challenge to do that every day. Some of them may have stayed up late with a baby, or something, and then they feel, Why should I play today? I'm tired, and, besides, I'm getting paid anyway. If I see a coach who can get inside that young man's head for a hundred and sixty-two games and find a way to let him use his ability, then that's the coach I want. That's what coaches are for."

Bob Brenly, a carryover coach with the Giants this year under their new manager, Dusty Baker, was a Giants catcher for the better part of a decade—a hardworking pro and a terrific favorite with San Francisco fans and San Francisco pitchers. He is seamed and strong-looking, with a dark mustache and a cheerful manner. "When I came into baseball, things were done sort of on gut

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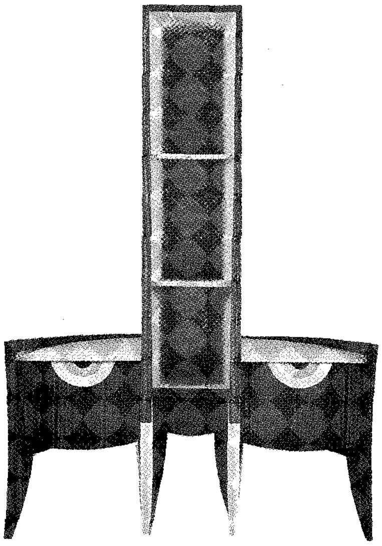

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instinct," he said when we sat down together. "Coaches said, 'This is the way we've always done it,' and you were supposed to learn from that. I remember Hank Sauer, who would always yell 'Can you hit, kid?' and you had to answer 'You bet your ass!' He insisted on it."

Brenly said he thought that younger coaches, the ones most recently off the field, might be the best communicators with today's young players. Players like him, I suggested, and he said, "It was probably true back then, too, only no one tried it. We have more problems now, because the players get up here and they seem unwilling to change. They don't want to bat some other way, or try anything different on the field. They feel, This is what got me here, so why should I try anything different?"

The best help for this, in Brenly's mind, is to urge the newcomers to watch older players on the club who are working on *their* games. Will Clark, for instance. A year ago in Scottsdale, Clark (if the Dalai Lama is reading this, Will Clark is the Giants' All-Star first baseman and nonpareil left-handed swinger) had been lining a lot of pitches foul into right field, and late one afternoon Brenly and I, from behind the batting cage, watched him repeatedly hitting outside pitches toward left field and then a bit toward center: working his way back around, in the parlance. This year, standing behind the same cage one morning, I noticed that Clark was doing exactly the opposite. The B.P. pitcher was throwing inside, on Will's instruction, and he was doggedly trying to inside-out the ball: keep his bat level and hit the pitch off his fists into left field. He kept talking to himself and gesturing to the pitcher to keep the ball in tight. He wasn't doing well at first, and finally he lost patience. "*Don't* come off the ball like that, Will Nuschler Clark!" he growled, stepping back. "*Stay* in there!" He made some rumbling noises and set his jaw—his mouth looks like an upside-down jack-o'-lantern's when he's up at bat—and yelled to the pitcher, "I'm going to inside you if it takes all fucking *day!*" The next pitch was on his hands again, but he inside-outed it like a mirror-image Roberto Clemente, and the ball flew hard down the left-field line and bounced on the white foul line. Clark said, "There. *Whatcha* think now?" He was staring at me but clearly still talking to Will Nuschler Clark. I looked around to see if anyone else had seen all this, perhaps even some young Giants, but no one seemed to be paying attention.

BUNTING is a whole lot easier than inside-outing the ball, but several coaches told me that contemporary players don't seem to have much interest in the art. Some of them blamed the aluminum bat—now universally employed in college ball—because the ball pings off its surface too quickly to make for a readily controlled bunt. Others mentioned artificial turf, which is likewise unconducive to the maneuver. Rod Carew, however, discards such excuses. "They're just plain not interested," he told me. "I look at these players who can run, and they never work on the bunt. I see kids with speed who are hitting about .220, and I tell them that they could be hitting .280 if they'd just add that bunt. They don't want to discipline themselves and stay with something. It's discouraging."

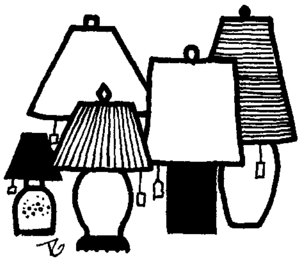
Carew, the stick-thin long-term batting coach with the Angels, has style: dark curly locks and seemingly permanently affixed shades, which he wears low on his nose, like a character actor. No one could ever do so many stylish things with a bat (one of his old managers, Bill Rigney, remembers a year when Carew had twenty bunt base hits over the season), and I said that it amazed me that young players didn't sense that there was something convincing about what he was telling them.

"I think they're not all that sure of themselves," Carew said quietly. "You try to throw out suggestions, but . . . In the end, you have to find out what a player has and work with *that*."

Ten days later, on a rainy morning at the Mets' camp, in Port St. Lucie, Florida, I watched another lanky grand master working on bunts inside one of the batting cages. It was the new Mets shortstop, Tony Fernandez—a ten-year veteran who came over from the Padres in a winter trade to serve as a groundsill for the team's crumbly left side. Fernandez is a switch-hitter, but after he gathered up the loose balls in the cage and reloaded the machine I noticed that he was staying lefty, batting from one side only, and still squaring around and tapping the ball again and again, laying each bunt down like a necktie on a bed. Then I remembered that Fernandez's usual stroke from that side of the plate loops the ball toward left field—a pretty thing to see but not much use whenever there might be a Mets base runner on first base whom he wanted to move along in a close game. The bunt, of course, would do just that—*will* do it, this year. Once again, though, there didn't seem to be any young players around taking in the lesson.

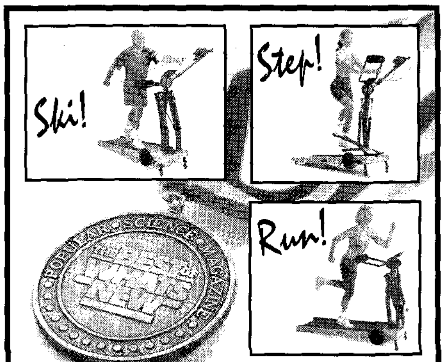
GLOOMY thoughts about the next generation have always been endemic in baseball, as elsewhere, and it should be pointed out that a freshet of exciting, talented, hardworking, and presumably attentive young ballplayers has come into the majors in the past three or four years and is already making a considerable mark. Mike Mussina, Steve Avery, Travis Fryman, Carlos Baerga, Gary Sheffield, Chuck Knoblauch, Ken Griffey, Jr., John Olerud, Delino DeShields, and the current American League home-run champion, Juan Gonzalez, are all twenty-four years old or under, and have brilliant careers in full momentum. Several almost guaranteed future stars (the Braves' Javy Lopez and Chipper Jones come to mind) are just down the road, and clubs like the Indians and this year's Angels have put their fortunes in the hands of some very young major leaguers, in part as a maneuver against the huge costs of veterans' salaries. But my spring tours convinced me that a visible broad fault line, dividing one generation of ballplayers from the next, has fallen across clubhouses within the past decade.

Dave Righetti, the spirited southpaw battler, is still only thirty-four years old (he is hanging on in the Giants' bullpen, after a 1992 season that cost him his job as the left-handed stopper for that club), but when he talks about his 1981 Rookie of the Year season, with the Yankees, it sounds like another baseball era altogether. "We had Lou Piniella and Bobby Murcer with the team then," he said. "Those guys couldn't run anymore, but they saw to it that guys played their positions properly. They knew when to sneak up on the infield. They always hit the cutoff man, because they knew they couldn't get the ball to the plate by themselves. Up at bat, they moved people over. Most of all, they made contact. Outside of Reggie, we never had a big swinger in the order, and we all hated strikeouts in the middle of an inning—that killed rallies."



Rags said he was amazed at the number of mistakes that were made on big-league teams nowadays, especially since every event on the field was so closely watched today, thanks to television. (In the old days, he almost whispered, if mistakes were made you never heard about it the next day.) He said he was impressed with the quality of coaching at the major-league level now, but believes that most of those coaches should be sent down to the A-level minors, where they are most needed. And he thinks that large signing bonuses for young prospects are a particular hazard. "The pressure to win is everywhere now, and it affects everyone, from the manager on down, but it's worst on the kids," he said. "You see guys come out of college ball now with a big name and maybe a lot of money—I mean, a lot—and there's this sense that they want to make it pay off for the club right away. I see them out there every day in the spring, trying to do too much. Sometimes I try to tell them, 'Hey, don't do *that!*' But they never listen—I'm just a pitcher."

Another old young pitcher in Arizona this spring was Ron Darling. Suddenly, he is thirty-two, and a ten-year man. He won fifteen games for the Athletics last year, with three two-hit shutouts along the way. He told me that on the first day of early spring training this year—pitchers and catchers only—he and Bob Welch, Dennis Eckersley, and Rick Honeycutt were in the locker room together after practice ended, and they noticed that all the younger players had dressed and departed. "It's half an hour after the workout, and we're alone," he said. "We were wondering where they'd all gone—I mean, you can only go to the mall so many times. That's a big difference, you know. Young players don't hang around and talk baseball anymore, and they don't hang around to listen. It used to be—and I'm not all *that* old—it used to be that you'd sit there for an hour and hope that maybe Tom Seaver would say hi, and maybe you could get him to talk about pitching. Or you'd be in the training room and some-



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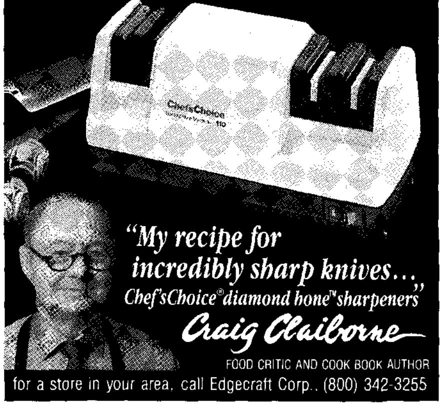

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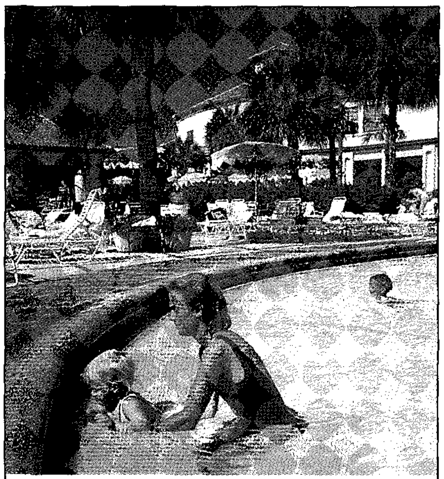

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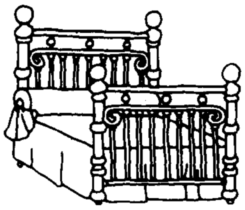

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body like Keith Hernandez was getting iced, and you'd hear some baseball. I used to think that if I waited around for an hour and a half and picked up one new thing I was way ahead."

I asked him what he thought had happened—I had first seen him pitch when he was in college, and now he felt like an envoy between my own baseball generation and the newest one—and he shrugged and said this was the way life went now, for the young. "Everything is visual," he said. "Everything is this minute, and the kids can't wait. They say, 'Tell me five things I need to know and tell them to me *now*.' You've got a hundred and fifty channels, and it's snap-snap, click-click. It's MTV, and they can't slow down."

I said this sounded all wrong for anyone trying to learn baseball.

"That's the thing of it," he said. "You know, you have to watch a whole ballgame to appreciate it—you can't go switching to another one if a pitcher happens to be going good and there's not much action out there. That's when you could be learning. A lot of players can't be appreciated right away, either. You take a Jose, a Rickey, and you see right away what they can do. But a Carney Lansford—you can watch him play over a whole season and keep picking up little things every day about how to win a ballgame. The other morning, I was telling some of our young players here how I used to wait all week for Saturday when I was a kid, to watch the old 'Game of the Week' on television. They couldn't get over that: '*One* game—get out of here!' They couldn't believe it."

Bill Rigney, unmistakable under his straw planter's hat, is to be found every March afternoon in the first or second row behind home plate at an Athletics game (he is a senior adviser with the club). Between pitches, he talks baseball, with gestures. I sometimes think I have heard every one of his baseball stories, but then he surprises me; besides, he is constantly adding fresh material, here at the front end, so I happily expect never to catch up. (I have noticed, by the way, that he shares Merv Rettenmund's favorable opinion of Rickey Henderson's and Jose Canseco's work habits, if not their maturity; back before Canseco was traded away last summer, Rigney sometimes referred to the two as Frick and Frack, after a pair of comedy skaters with the old Ice Follies.)

When Rigney came up in the game, in the late thirties and early forties, on his way to the New York Giants (and then along to an extensive managerial career), the word was that a veteran player would never help a rookie, for fear the kid would grab his job. He didn't find it that way, though. On the contrary, he kept running into old-timers—Dick Bartell, Charlie Gehringer (a teammate on a Navy service team in wartime), Ernie Lombardi—who seemed to go out of their way to pass along a little hint about grabbing off ground balls, quickening the double-play flip to second, or dealing with Ewell Blackwell's crossfire fastball up at the plate. Nowadays, Rigney believes, you almost never see an older player take a kid aside and offer a tip. "We have all those coaches to do that now," he said. "The feeling isn't the same."

Almost the biggest change, in Rigney's view, has been the loss of baseball talk. "During the great '51 Giants season, we'd be on the road, all that time on trains and in hotels, and there'd be six or seven players—Stanky, Dark, Maglie, Westrum, Thomson, Whitey Lockman, me—in somebody's room, having a beer and a sandwich and talking about the next day's game. We were looking for that little edge—something about the other team's pitcher, or about some batter, that might give us that little edge. Now it's done differently. When our coaches and the manager finish each day, they're watching games on TV, watching those tapes, to see what the opposition is doing. We never had *that* advantage."

Rigney believes that kids who have grown up watching baseball on television acquire knowledge of the game but not experience. "Getting here happens so quickly for them, you forget how few games they have under their belt," he said. "A player arrives in a year and a half sometimes, and you can see he's got a lot of ability but he's still lost in the game. You can't help noticing how different it is with some of the Latin-American kids, because they've grown up playing ball when they were young, the way we all used to. They know why the game is played right to left, from first base to third, instead of the other way around, and some of our young players still don't."

I brought up the geographical phenomenon of the dozen-odd wonderfully accomplished infielders from the Dominican Republic who have come into the majors in the past decade or so, and Rig said, "Yes, all those quick guys from—what's that place? San Pedro de Macorís. That one city. Well, it isn't the drinking water down there that's turning out shortstops—it's sandlot ball fields. No tennis courts, no swimming pools, no weight rooms, no Little League. They're playing ball all day and all night. They're ready when they get up to the big leagues, because they've all had the little problems along the way and learned what you do to get around them, how to adjust. When you have that happen after you get up here, it can be tough on a young player, believe me."

Money seldom came into these conversations and speculations, I noticed, and when it did it presented itself as another sort of pressure or a complicating sort of obstacle to change. Established veteran players have to deal with slumps and off years, of course, which can be as painful and baffling as anything that a rookie runs into, and a two- or three-million-dollar salary under those circumstances adds a stifling, onerous factor to the puzzle. Coaches want to help, but they hesitate to speak to a veteran without invitation.

Mark McGwire, the massive Athletics basher, went through the 1991 season hopelessly locked into a batting stance that appeared to give him very little chance against breaking pitches on the far side of the plate, and finished at .201, with a bare twenty-two home runs: his worst season in the majors. The A's staff circled the problem warily, concerned but unable to break the spell; radical alterations to a famous mechanism can be fatal. Rene Lachemann, for one, believes that many big-league hitters do far too much tinkering with their swing once things begin to go wrong. Last spring, a new Oakland batting coach, Doug Rader, held extended private conversations with McGwire that resulted in a stance an inch or two closer to home plate, a more closed-up front shoulder, an infinitesimal toeing-in of his front foot, and further minute ingredients that neither man would divulge—armed with which Big Mac batted .268 over the ensuing 1992 season, with forty-two home runs and a hundred and four runs batted in: nothing to it. When I asked Rader why it had taken so long for McGwire to change, he said, "Maybe it depends on who a player is listening to. If you have something to say that's worthwhile, he'll listen. If you're a nincompoop, he *shouldn't* listen. The key is to be qualified."

Fear of change and fear of failure are commonplace in any profession, one may suppose, but sports punish failure so swiftly and with such grisly results that the spectre of debacle attends every game, waiting ghoulishly to climb up on this or that player's back and hitch a ride. Long-term players, however brilliant, are never surprised by that clammy hand on their necks, but it's far worse when you're young. Duffy Dyer, the old, square-jawed Mets backstop, coaches third base for the Brewers these days, and in Chandler one morning he remarked that the best of the young players rise so rapidly in today's narrow tier of minor leagues that they sometimes arrive in the majors entirely untouched by doubt. "Then something might go wrong for them all at once," he said. "Maybe there are hitters who can handle one of their best pitches at this level, or, if they're hitters, there's a kind of pitching they've never seen before. They're in trouble, but they don't want to change, because they've never *had* to change. For some of them, this is the first failure they've ever experienced in their lives. Then you notice less talented players who have struggled or failed at the minor-league level and had to learn to make changes, so when they get up here they're more flexible. They're better off than the kid who's been a star all along and can't understand it when he runs into trouble."

WHEREVER I went these mornings in Arizona and Florida, I gravitated toward coaches and watched them going about their homely tasks: throwing batting practice or knocking out ground balls to the infielders, or running one of the endless early-spring drills—pickoffs, rundowns, pitchers covering first base; cutoff plays with a runner on second, cutoff plays with runners at first and third, cutoff plays with the ball hit to right field, to center field, to left field, and to deep foul ground, right and left (and all with

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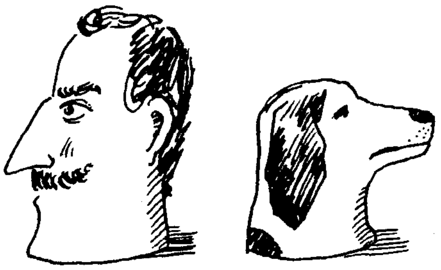
the assembled, standing-around older players groaning and shaking their heads at the boredom of going through this again, for the hundredth or thousandth time, but then laughing and horsing around once they got into it, because it made them feel like rookies again). The coaches never stopped working. You'd see one on a camp stool reaching into a ball bag and then flipping up a fresh ball, over and over, into the air for a batter, just to one side of him, to swing at and whack into the soft-toss screen before them. A coach would step out from behind the cage in batting practice and, smiling in encouragement, talk earnestly to a batter while he pointed to the batter's knee, touched the point of his front shoulder, then executed a little twist of his own hips, as example, with his hands held back, while a swing was dissected and put together again. A thickset older pitching coach, with his feet oddly tilting upward on the steep back side of a practice mound, would murmur vertically up to a towering young right-hander and then take the pitcher's wrist and turn it a fraction to the left while gently gesturing with his own hand, up and down, as the kneeling catcher waited patiently at the other end, with his mitt hand resting on one thigh. In the afternoon games, the coaches, as usual, sat together, with the manager in among them, on a little row of chairs just outside the overpopulated dugout (on the home-plate side, I mean), where they could catch some rays as they followed each pitch and swing and play, and confabulated among themselves while the batters and pitchers came and went. In odd moments, whenever a coach waited for his next pupil to step into the cage, or while a couple of them were drinking soup from cardboard cups during the lunch break, I came over and asked questions—and found them, *without* exception, burning to talk about the work.

Dave Duncan, the quiet, much esteemed Oakland pitching coach, said that he had come to rely on his veterans to take up some of the teaching load. "I use good pitchers only," he added. "Shoot, why wouldn't I take advantage of Rick Honeycutt's ability to throw the slider? He's got a great understanding of that pitch and the mechanics of it. He can teach that better than I can."

Phil Garner, the smart, direct young manager of the Brewers, said that the talent shortage sometimes affected the way managers and coaches dealt with gifted players. "If somebody makes a mistake, or says I'm not going to do this, you can reprimand him, but you can't sit him down, because you have no one to replace him with," he said. "You can yell at him or call him into your office, but what else can you do? And there's an economic factor—with all that money he's getting, how long are you going to keep him on the bench?"

Over in Florida, Mets manager Jeff Torborg said he remembered the pride he felt, back when he was coaching, after he'd worked with some pitcher over a period of time and had then seen him suddenly take a turn for the better. "I was with Dave LaRoche on the Indians, back in the seventies, and we worked together for a long time on his mechanics," he said. "He got traded off to the Angels and had a good year there, and when the season ended I got a blank check in the mail from him, with a note for me to take Susie on vacation to Hawaii, or anything else I wanted. I sent it back, but I told him I sure appreciated the sentiment. Now Dave is with me as our bullpen coach, you know." He saw something in my face, and laughed. "Naw, he didn't buy me off. Dave's been with me for years, because he knows the work."

Leo Mazzone, the pitching coach for the Atlanta Braves, watches over the finest assemblage of young arms in the land—the Messrs. Glavine, Smoltz, Avery, et al., and now a brand-new partner, Greg Maddux, late of the Cubs, who is the incumbent Cy Young Award holder in his league. Mazzone believes that staying his hand is often the best remedy for the pitching blahs, and cites in evidence John Smoltz's melodramatic adventures in 1991, a season in which the right-hander's pitching record stood at a horrific 2–11 by the first week in July; Smoltz then turned things around in electrifying fashion, finishing up at 14–13, while his team completed its rush from last place to first in a single season. "We felt the stuff was there and the talent was there, and the best thing we could do was keep giving him the ball every fifth day," Mazzone said. "Bobby Cox, our manager, kept telling Smoltzie, 'We believe in you, we have faith in you.' I think more pitchers are hurt by overcoaching than the other way. So many managers and coaches will drift this way, then that way after each performance. One day, the pitcher's great, and the next time out you go to him all upset and say he's not so good. You can't get a pitcher on an upbeat tempo that way. If they're talented and physically healthy, just let them go."



THE chorus of outdoor male voices and the looks of so many squinty, brown-eared, friendly coachfaces under caps had begun to blur and blend in my mind, and, in need of synthesis, or something, I went to Walt Jocketty, who is director of baseball administration for the Athletics. He is a Minnesotan, blond and blue-eyed, and, at forty-two, has been through almost every level of the game; it's the consensus that he will be a general manager somewhere one of these days. In conversation, he has the pausing, open-ended tone that I have noticed in many experienced baseball executives, as befits a business in which success or its devastating opposite is so often determined by the weird hop, the frayed tendon, or the bloop, wrong-field double off the hands. He couldn't disagree with any of the coaching tips or theories I brought up, because each of them, of course, had proved to be the right answer somewhere. He went along with Ron Darling's view that young players seem younger than ever, and wildly distractible, and that they don't talk baseball anymore. "It's a whole different generation, but what I know is that you've got to treat them like grownups," he said. "With us, it all begins there."

The talent squeeze—a decline of experienced prospects because of fewer diamonds and fewer accumulated innings, along with the unceasing present competition among the various professional sports for a handful of young genius-athletes, the future superstars—afflicts baseball in particular, he pointed out, since the road to the majors in baseball is longer than it is in other sports. The Shaquille O'Neal legend—from high-school star to national megacelebrity in four years—isn't something baseball can offer as bait to a seventeen-year-old all-sport, all-state prospect. At the same

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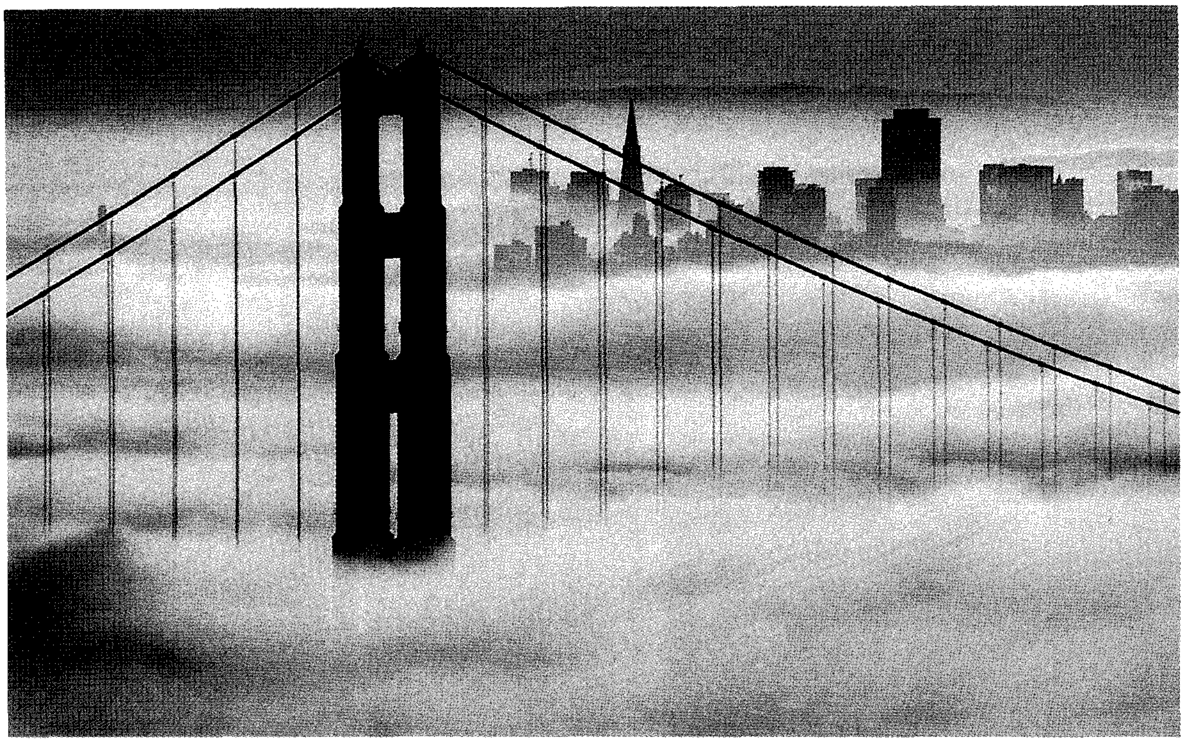

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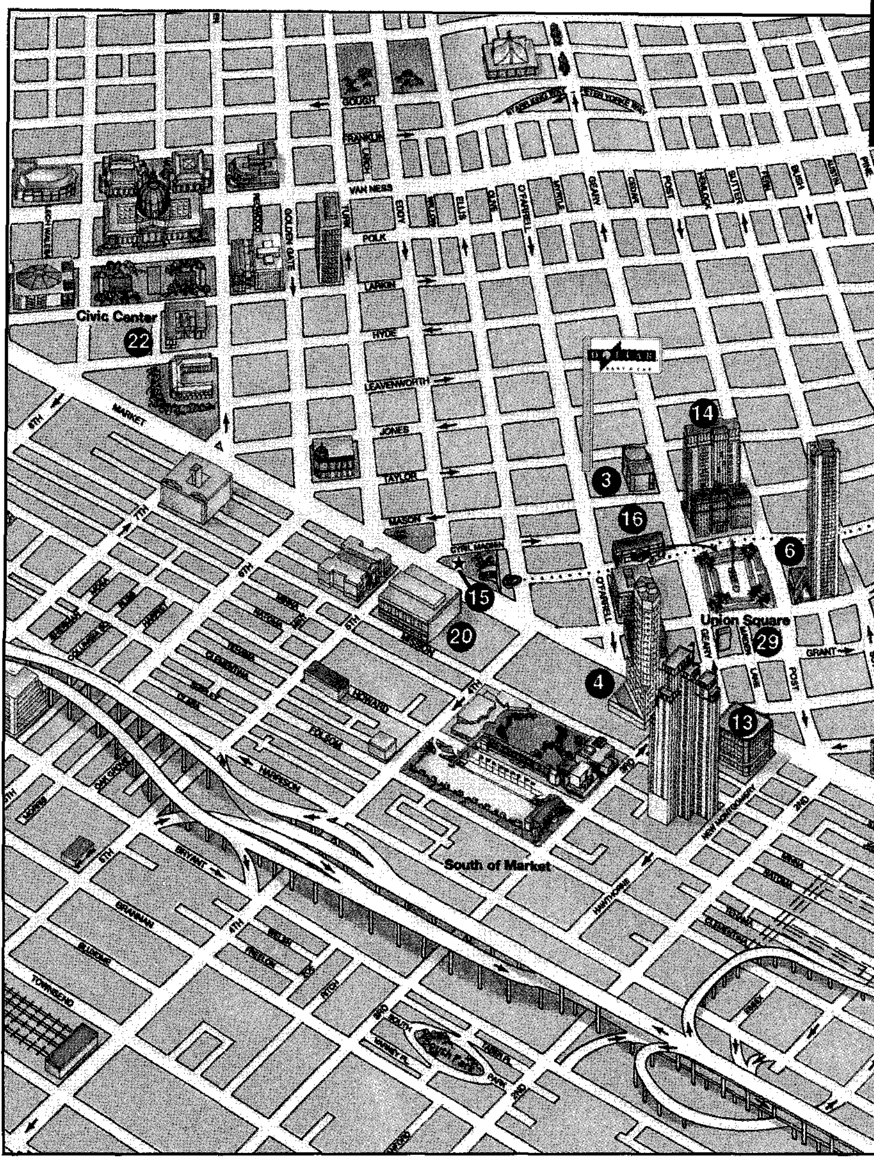
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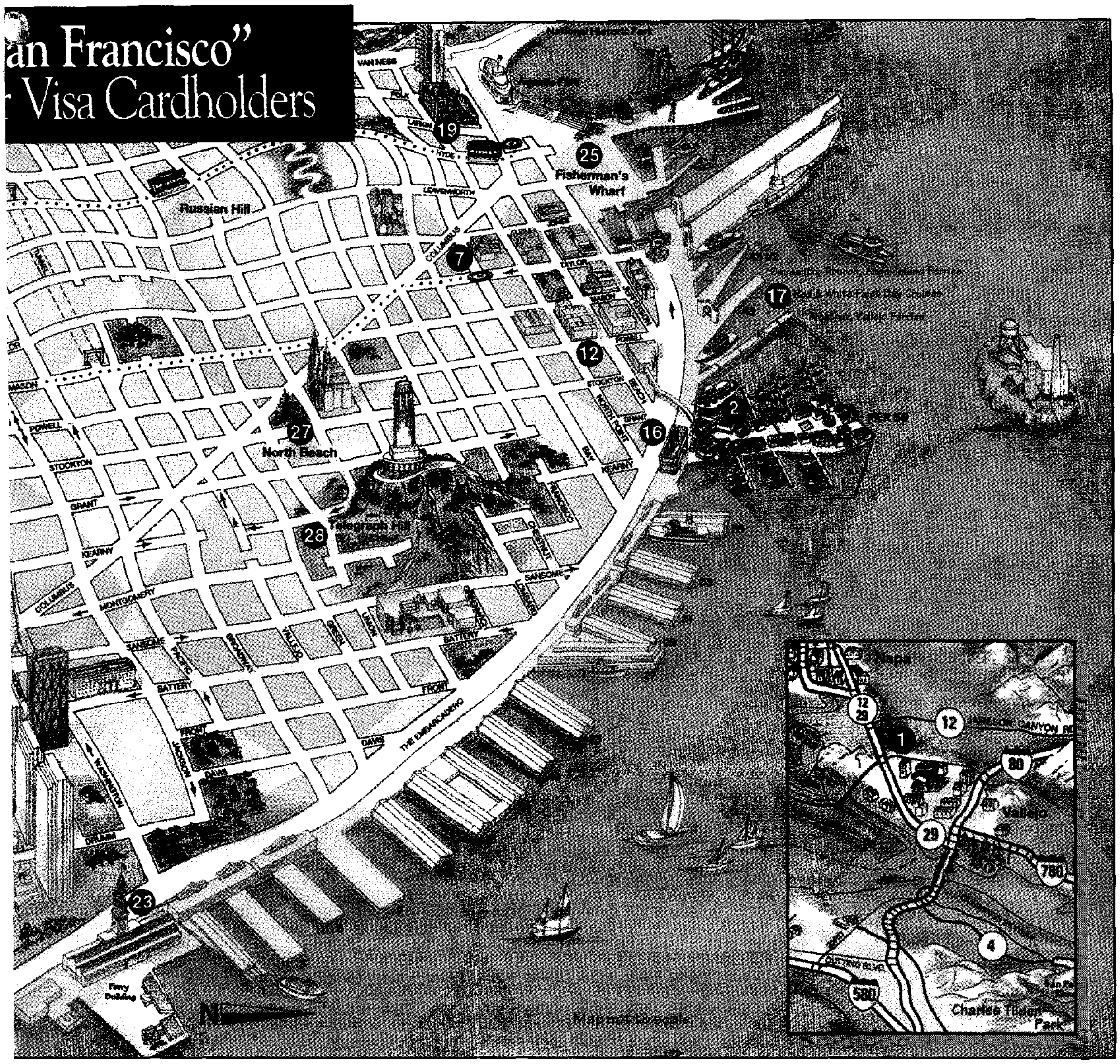
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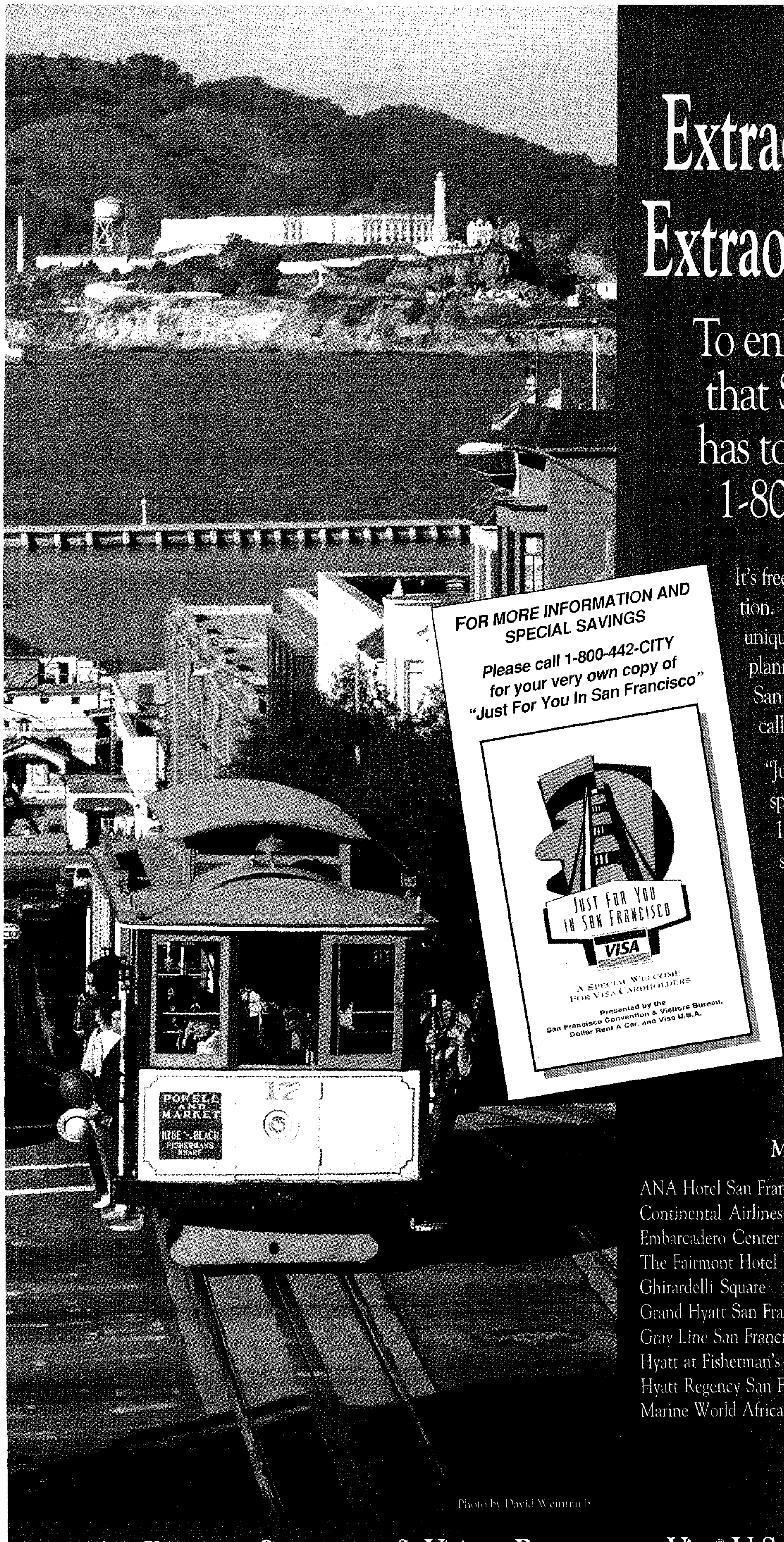

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San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau   Visa® U.S.A.   Dollar Rent A Car time, the continuing expansion of baseball’s major leagues and diminution of the minors makes the matriculation of rookies feel hurried and inadequate: suddenly they are in your big-team dugout, where they sit and don’t ask questions. “I don’t know if they think they know it all, or if they’re afraid someone will notice that they don’t know enough,” Jocketty said. “It’s puzzling. Just lately, I’ll think I’m starting to see more of them talking to the veterans, after they’ve been around awhile. Maybe they’re deciding, Look, maybe I’ve missed something.”

Even at the beginning major-league level, the money makes everything harder, Jocketty went on. Persuading first- or second-year players to go to winter ball in order to sharpen their skills is not easy these days. “It’s a whole different mind-set from what it was ten years ago,” he said. “A player can make the majors a year or so out of college, if he’s gone that route, and suddenly he’s earning the major-league minimum of a hundred and nine thousand dollars, plus about eighty thousand in licensing rights. That’s a lot more than his classmates are pulling down, so why should he go down to Venezuela or Puerto Rico in the off-season and play in those backcountry parks for a few extra bucks, just to work on his game? You really have to love the game and want to take pride in yourself as a player to counteract something like that. Troy Neel, who’ll d.h. for us this year, went to Mexico the last two winters and learned how to hit the breaking ball. Now it’s paid off. We’re trying to use him as an example to some of our younger kids. It’s funny—you had to work harder in the old days for anything you got, but it made you want it all that much more. Things have turned around.”

BEFORE I left Arizona this year, I made a point of paying a visit to the back diamond at Ho Ho Kam Park, the Cubs’ spring-training center, in Mesa. The back field, which is notable for a tall, shaggy stand of eucalyptus trees on its third-base side, is dusty and inelegant; fans who find their way behind the left-field fence of the main diamond may think for a moment that they’ve stumbled on a high-school field. Then they hang around, some of them standing with their fingers looped through the chain-link fencing behind home, because the place, with its shadows and sunshine and its carpet of dried leaves in the dirt, has kept the informality and sense of ease that once characterized spring training everywhere. When I got there, I found Tom Trebelhorn rapping out ground balls to a handful of second-level Cubs players, raggedly bunched into groups behind the second-base and first-base positions on the diamond. A young second baseman and first baseman stepped forward in unison, and Trebelhorn, taking back his long, interesting-looking fungo bat, knocked a ball to the left side of the second baseman, just within reach, and he went low for the scoop, reversed his feet, and threw easily over to first.

“Good play!” Trebelhorn called out. “You knew you had time to get it right. That’s experience! That’s your good knowledge!”

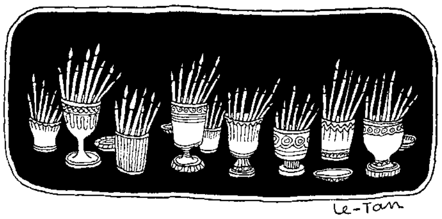
He fielded the lobbed return toss with his bare right hand (he bats left-handed) and launched the next bouncer toward second with the same easy motion, but this time the ball caught the rim of the infield grass and darted low: a surprise for the new man out there, who flinched but then snaffled the ball in the outer part of his mitt.

“Yeah—*play* that lipper!” Trebelhorn responded. “Tough play! Atta boy, Tommy! Good field!”

Trebelhorn, an old friend, sounded the same as ever, which is to say exactly like every high-school and summer-camp baseball coach of my distant baseball past. He looked over and saw me, and called, “Same time, same place! Was it this *day* last year? I tell you one thing—this is probably the same fungo I had here then.”

There was a pause while some of his students rearranged themselves, and he came over—bare-armed, intense, sinewy, and with the same never-fail, ready smile. “The eternal, polite, patient routines of baseball that keep us all together,” he said, burying my hand in his.

Same Treb-talk, too. He’s the kind of man who makes you glad you didn’t take up astronomy or the cello as a sideline. Now, at forty-five, he is in his second season as a Cubs coach, after seven seasons as a minor-league manager and then six as manager of the Milwaukee Brewers, the post he held when I first came to know him and to listen to him. His Brewer teams, a bit undermanned, were customary contenders in the American League East but were also afflicted with a phenomenal propensity for injuries to key players. When I caught up with him in 1992 as a new coach with the Cubs, here on the back diamond at Ho Ho Kam, he said that his friends had always told him he was a coach at heart. “The perfect job at last!” he said. I knew he had never made it up to the majors in his playing days (he finished at Lewiston, in the Northwest League), but that, too, he once explained, was an advantage for anyone who wanted to stay on in the game. “If my ability as a player is a little short, I’m going to have to understand this situation a half second quicker than the guy who’s bigger and stronger than me,” he said. “I’m going to have to work more. That’s why you see so many coaches and managers, even at the high-school level, who were never such hot players. They were good thinkers, good at noticing, and they had imagination.”



Practice went on in its old patterns: with another coach, out on the mound behind his little half screen, throwing a pitch that was lined or bounced or popped up by the batter in the cage; and then Trebelhorn, from the sideline, at once batting *his* ball to the waiting infielders. In the pauses, Treb told me the names of some of the young Cub infielders he was working; a couple of them—Jose Vizcaino and big Kevin Roberson—I recognized from my previous visit, and Treb identified another, Chuck McElroy, as a pitcher with secret hopes of being converted into an infielder one of these days. By their youthful faces and the high numbers on the back of their uniform tops, I knew that most of the Cubs here would soon be sent down to the minor-league complex and would end up in Iowa or Orlando this summer. Some would not make it back up to the big club’s spring roster next year. Trebelhorn would stay on with the Cubs through the season, as bench coach and offensive coördinator, but it seemed clear to me that this sort of patient, one-ball-at-a-time work was something for which he has a particular genius. (Up until a few years ago, he was a high-school history teacher in the off-season.) He was incapable of patronizing young ballplayers, and his ridiculous, winning chatter disarmed their cool. I couldn’t prove it, but I had the impression that these youngsters, for all their ambitions, were happy enough to be here today, on a lesser diamond, along with their upbeat, down-home sort of coach, and far from the awesome likes of Mark Grace and Candy Maldonado.

Treb kept the workout working. "One more shot!" he called to Roberson, at first base. "Here comes a double down the line. Feet, feet! . . . Yes, *sir!*"

A moment later, he paused to watch a left-handed hitter in the cage, Dwight Smith, and called over, "When do you pull?"

"After?" Smith said tentatively.

"After is right!" Trebelhorn said. "If you start to pull and the pitcher pitches you away, you're dead! Don't die on me—*wait!*"

He knocked another grounder out to first—to a new man there, who made a slick-looking grab down by his ankles. "Hey!" Treb said. "He's a right-handed Willie Montanez! You remember Willie Montanez—" The young first baseman spread his arms wide, without a clue. "A showboat, just like you," Trebelhorn said. "Great tools, just like you."

He and the coach on the pitcher's mound stopped the exercises briefly and consulted their watches, and Trebelhorn then sprinted out to the middle of the infield and pushed a low screen from one side of second base to the other. "We have time management around here," he said after he came back, "but what these players don't know is that my clock goes from sunup to sundown."

He picked up his fungo—a narrow wand widening to a thicker, bottle-shaped outer shaft, which was wrapped in dirty white tape. Wielding the ancient instrument, an experienced batting coach, altering the range and speed of his ground balls by excruciating increments, can reduce a powerful, full-grown infielder to a panting rag doll in a matter of minutes. Many coaches have shifted over to the aluminum bat for infield work, but Treb told me that he preferred the sound and heft of the fungo. A few years ago, he'd set about restoring an antique, dark-stained fungo that had turned up in one of the Brewers' bat bags, and when he unwrapped the tape from the barrel he'd discovered a team name, Hollywood Stars, stamped there. "From the old Pacific Coast League, if you can believe it," he said. "That fungo was at least forty years old."

The conversation went on, between Trebelhorn's grounders and called-out instructions and side bets (for Cokes), and at some point I ventured surprise that this old-time, ritualized one-on-one was still a daily staple of the game. "These players need it more than ever," he said. "We're making up lost ground. You hate to think talented people need remediation, but about a third of all the players need to be caught up a little. In this game, we're faster and bigger, but we lack the basic foundation we had when everyone grew up playing ball—playing every position. Playing Hotrock, playing Double or Nothing, playing Workup, playing Home Run Derby. Now those games are gone, and the kids don't know their names anymore. No more sandlots and no more baseball rats. What we have now are basketball rats, and that hoop in every back yard. Now the kids play basketball games—play Twenty-One and Crunch, play Jam, play Horse. But I don't mind if baseball needs to work a little harder now, just to keep up. Our whole society needs more coaching and motivation, not just ballplayers, or why should our social-services population be so great?"

The workout ended; the bats were bagged and the balls collected and tossed into a supermarket cart. Trebelhorn and the tall young Cubs walked around the low perimeter fence and through another gate, and came slowly across the outfield grass of the stadium diamond, in the warm sunshine. The fans were coming in and finding their way to their seats for the afternoon game. Treb looked entirely fresh, and when I asked him what he did to stay in shape in the winter he told me that he still played in a tough street-hockey league, back in his home town of Portland, Oregon, a couple of times a week, and shot a little basketball with his three sons. "I used to play in basketball games down at the Y," he said. "But that's all lawyers and businessmen and accountants now, and what they like to do is stop and argue about the rules. The next morning, they send you a fax, with a page from the rule book on it." He shook his head. This coming winter, he said, he just might go to Australia, where a baseball team in Perth had invited him to come out and give them a hand. "Baseball is the fastest-growing sport in Australia, did you know that?" he said.

We reached the dugout, and the players ducked their heads and went into the clubhouse for lunch, but Treb stopped in front of the box seats and began signing baseballs and programs for some kids there. I wondered if they knew who he was. Soon he was talking about the game again: about its appealing pace and its sense of intimacy with individual players, and about its waning in the inner cities—in the Bronx, and in Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes, where Kirby Puckett grew up, and in the parts of the Bay Area where Claudell Washington grew up—and about the absolute necessity of turning that around somehow. "There's plenty of baseball players waiting in there," he said. "And there's doctors, lawyers, teachers, judges—young women and young men. We're doing a very bad job there and we all know it." Then he was on to recreational preferences around the country—computer people hiking in the Sierras, immigrants playing soccer in Central Park. "Asians are playing basketball like crazy right now," he declared.

Suddenly, he reminded me of Bart Giamatti, another world-class talker and connector, and I felt reassured about the old game of baseball. Tom Trebelhorn could be my commissioner for a while: a private appointment. He signed another ball and said to its possessor, a startled-looking ten- or twelve-year-old girl, "It's a different world now, but I don't think we need to take baseball out of its socio-economic context. We're getting the same thinking athletes that I.B.M. gets in *its* work force. It's all one and the same."

"Thank you," she said.

Treb laughed and stopped signing, and he and I said we'd try to meet here again—same time, same place—a year from now. "Same fungo," I said.

"Same fungo," he said. "I was thinking about that just the other day, trying to figure out how long I'd been doing this. Did you ever throw up bottle caps and try to hit them with a broom when you were a kid? I sure did. It's thirty-five years I've been hitting something round with something flat. Too late to stop now." ♦

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A FAN'S NOTES

HOLLYWOOD CLOSEUP

Trials and triumphs of the Oscars, from the rehearsal stage at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to Irving Lazar's party at Spago.

BY HAROLD BRODKEY

Stars, right? And, as always in America, money as the background. The Academy Awards show gives us stars. It does it by gender—presenting men one way, women another. Women? The most complex, strongly illuminating, slightly off-duty images of what at the moment is felt to be attractive in women may be the prime demonstration of the show: warmth, charm, liveliness, bone structure, talent, what have you. That these women represent some sort of peak of their gender is indicated by the fact that just sighting one of them on the street or getting out of a limousine gives point to a day and becomes a long-term anecdote for many of us.

MARIO MICOSSI

The Academy Awards treat these peak men and women mostly in a suburban country-club way, showing what is acceptable (desirable) and attractive in women, in men, often darkly or perversely. The show is codified, like the American country club itself, so that a lot of it can be fully understood only by insiders—while it is seen symbolically or as romance by outsiders.

The awards, in their six-decades-long history, have steadily had a Wasp bias. In the nineteen-thirties, the secret count was how many Catholics won an award. Except for Paul Muni, the Jews were a minor part of it all; John Garfield, Edward G. Robinson, Sylvia Sidney, Paulette Goddard—none of them won an Oscar during that time. In a society without much in the way of accurate social reporting and with no tradition of a social sense of itself, one of the few glimpses of its actual social reality—who was loved, who was envied, who got invited, what people looked and dressed like more or less at the top—incomplete as that glimpse was, was offered in this movieland ritual. In this idea of the top, in this besieged and yet still, for a moment, triumphant country club, with its mass market and democratic base, and its Wasp bias, we see male notions of protected daughters and wives. And daughters and wives gone *a bit wild.* And we see, from year to year—usually on off years—one or two examples of the unprotected outsider-woman, the bandit-woman, in feathers or leather or in feathers *and* leather. If you're old enough, you may remember the mother-versus-whore, nice-girl-versus-slut games of Oscar shows in the past.

The trouble this year with the awards, whose theme was supposedly "Oscar Celebrates Women and the Movies," was that the oblique signals and hidden references were too simplified and the over-all treatment was too numb, or too dumb. There was no *frisson*, no scandal, as a conscious, sly thread through the show. Perhaps unconsciously, most of the complications in the way women are regarded (and in the ways women regard themselves) got lost in a general haze of condescendingly respectful bimboization of some of the stars and an acknowledgment, dim but perceptible, that some (odd-looking) women exist not without but a bit beyond sex, beyond expensive T. & A. and beyond even ladylike tits and ass.

The key moment actually occurred near the start of the show, when Watusi-legged, six-foot, very white Geena Davis—with her enormous, Betty Boop head—came out wearing a long dress with an apostrophe-shaped cutout between her breasts showing that they were supported by naught but their own youthful hubris. And she read off the teleprompter a tribute to what women supposedly learn at the movies about being women: by golly and by gum and by God, they learn how to be women *in movie theatres.* Not through birth or nurture or social pressure but at the goddam movies. It was a sort of *Time*-essay version of Hallmark-greeting-card prose about woman-in-general being instructed at the cineplex. It was not a speech written by a woman. The moment was not subject to rational enjoyment or even rational interpretation. Written by a man, it was a blast of conceit and a country-club recitation of what a locally attractive woman, a sex object circa 1953, would be if one didn't think too much about it. And it was acted out, illustrated: the lighting was such that a slightly paradisal glow was cast on the inverse parentheses of the inner curves of Davis's breasts while she recited "to shoot from the hip, to tease and uplift, to be villainous, wily"—at one point Davis gave an involuntary, embarrassed grin at the mass of words, like tadpole eggs, that she could do nothing with, and the big-boned Betty Boop head swung a bit toward the horizontal, as if to enter an animated cartoon, an entirely willed, unreal, malely sexual world.

And this is Geena Davis, the woman who played in "A League of Their Own" and "Thelma & Louise." She specializes, it's true, in the less damaged and more dependent woman—she is almost a strike-breaking scab in this feminist era. But in her acting is something amazingly full-blooded, temperamental, depth-filled, liquescent, sometimes scorchingly far out, which combines with a hint of abandonment to mindlessness, to an endless near-death or suffocation as a woman. So, this is Geena Davis, a tremendous young talent of considerable fascination and ambiguity, and she is given a cretinously sentimental speech about how a woman learns to be a woman in a movie theatre, while a haloing light illuminates her cleavage. She is reduced to the synecdoche of tits, and to being a good sport, this movie star in a clearly gilded cage mouthing nonsense. We don't analyze as we watch, but on some level we know at this point that the awards are tendentious, not subversive or honest or complex, just argumentative; and that they're not going to help us in our lives this year. We don't turn off the set, but we turn off our minds: we start reading between the pixels; we watch in a more distant way and think the awards stupid and feel a restless itch for something we can't name. We know we're being cheated, even if the show is free.

THAT'S what was on TV sets around the world. But that isn't quite what I saw. I didn't see the awards show most of you saw until a week later. At the time, I was in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, with its ninety-five-foot-high proscenium, watching, along with twenty-six hundred other people, a show only bits of which were telecast. And what I saw was good, surreal, as strange as hell, full of shadows and low points and high spots, and never dull. (Earlier, I had seen some of the rehearsals, in their usual messy warmth, while sitting in the first or second row among the placards set up in the seats around me with photographs and names of the big shots who would sit in those seats.) Actually, I saw a show that the producer, Gil Cates, and the director, Jeff Margolis, never saw. Of course, they'd seen the run-through and the dress rehearsal. But they were in "the truck" during most of the performance, picking images from the fourteen interior cameras and the seven exterior cameras they were maneuvering, and putting together the television show that such a large chunk of the world saw.

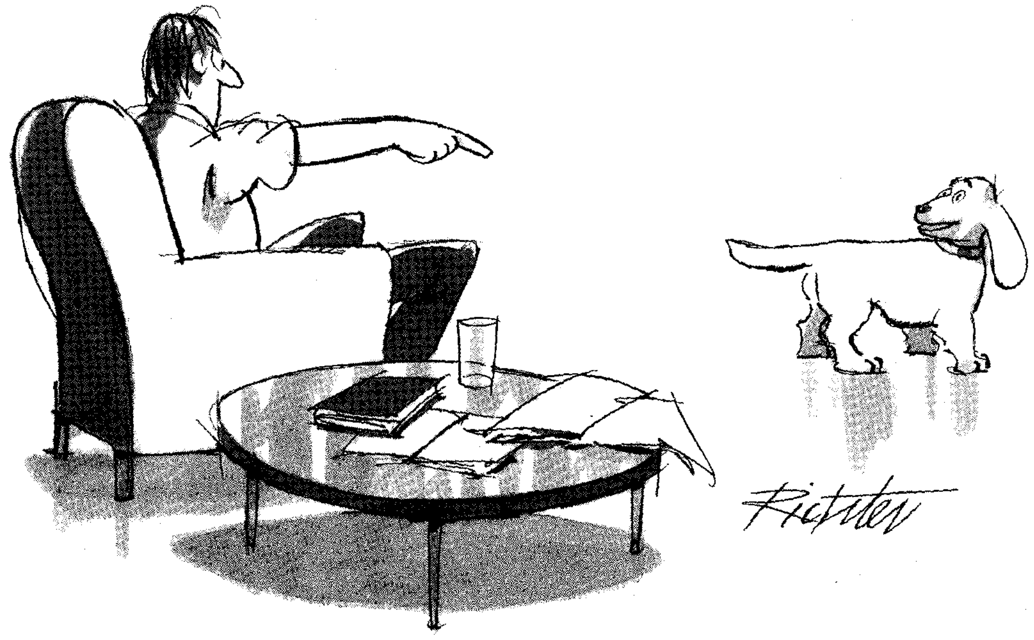
Whatever the offscreen finagling among the Hollywood samurai to control parts of the show and to make use of it for publicity and to dispense favors or exact vengeance, whatever the big-toothed, well-barbered, notoriously barbaric sharks did or didn't do, the show as it occurred in the theatre was warm-hearted, unhysterical, not particularly egoistic—except, maybe, for Barbra Streisand, and she had reason, as we shall see. The crew and the orchestra and the choreographer don't have a lot of rehearsal time, and they don't bullshit about the quality or lack of quality of the songs, say, or about the merit of what they can accomplish, of what can be staged, under the circumstances. But the level of admiration for stardom and what goes into it, the outright near-love for the professional skills and magnetism on parade, the interplay between celebrity and the weird amusements of the audience on this occasion, and the implications about human limitations and superhuman show-business souls, are stunning. And effectual. They wrap you in show business in the friendly way of those old M-G-M musicals with Rooney and Garland.

Even the admiration for the stars as they make their way into the theatre past the fans and the reporters is more moving than horrible, more paradigm of something than parody of stardom. The feelings are heartfelt, tactful, and particularized, star by star, reporter by reporter. Gregory Peck, wearing too much makeup and looking as if he were about to be laid out rather than about to perform, had a gloriously friendly look and genuinely feasted on the attention. Some of the older women—Sophia Loren, for one—had a special Cinderella burden, a time limit to how long they could feel safe about how great they looked, so that their warmth was a bit crimped at the edges compared with Peck's. Or Bob Hope's. Hope spent a certain amount of time singing to himself.

Streisand came into the awards brouhaha already on the gender warpath, because of the Academy's having slighted her last year as director of "The Prince of Tides." And when she showed up at the rehearsals she made special use of their warmth and folksiness. She demanded a trailer—one with viewing equipment. Then she came onstage not in old clothes or daytime clothes but dressed for the awards. She tried two dresses, one low-cut and one not so low-cut, and the one not so low-cut was a Donna Karan, someone told me. She had her bit onstage in each dress taped. She asked the rehearsal audience if it thought a gold necklace or a diamond necklace would look better with her dress. "If I wear diamonds, they have to change the lighting of the whole set," she said. She taped her statements about women directors and about directors without gender a couple of times onstage, working with the show's producers; offstage, she revised and rethought what she was going to do. Working from tapes that showed on television monitors what she looked and sounded like, she wrote and rewrote what she was going to say. She adjusted her makeup and her voice—and her necklace—to fit what she was going to do during the show.

Elizabeth Taylor is neither stupid nor foolish, and never—or rarely—foolish about the effect she makes on or off camera. She is a movie star, and she is of a different generation from Streisand. Taylor isn't fascinated by technology or at war with the media—she isn't at war with the world or with people's attitudes toward women in the same way that Streisand is. Their rage and energy spring from the same root, but Taylor isn't interested in television—few movie people are—and she isn't a recording artist, who has learned about audio technology, fighting all the way. For her, the TV screen is too small compared with a full-size movie screen; it can't convey space or movement, or glamour, to the same extent—at least, not yet.

In the theatre during the ceremonies, one saw the small, lone figure of Elizabeth Taylor come out on a very wide stage, into a lot of brightly and imaginatively lit space, in front of a lot of faces in an audience that one was part of: there were a lot of us and one small *her*—a famous her, in a kind of flesh-colored peignoir. One seemed to see her drawing on her strength of will under the weight of the world's attention, felt mostly as antagonism, or as sexual intrusion—a wish to see her fail, to watch as she loses her looks or this immediate battle, to see age gouge her and a change of styles make her look cheap despite the jewels. In the theatre, in the full scale of things, her small being confronted that wish as a figure accustomed



"Stay? But, Harv, there's a great, wide, wonderful world out there waiting for me!"

• •

to fame, a figure more or less fearless. In the theatre, Elizabeth Taylor was electrifying—personal and alive, isolated, relentless, and concerned with her own vanity, her own destiny, and with charity on the most practical, least elevated level.

But in the television closeup, one saw a face entirely out of scale, locked into a kind of golden telephone booth of space; one saw a willful woman, hard at work, losing her nerve off and on in her speech, or else simply drawing on a store of unsuitable facial expressions. One saw someone not alone, someone who for most of her life has not been alone, who has commanded enormous media attention since she was twelve, someone spoiled and so egocentrically self-concerned that the speech was nearly impossible to follow. She seemed almost like a bully in her presumption within the limited television space of the closeup. Her face is so much a medium for the transmission of effect, so famous, and with age and design now so much that of a jewelled, enamelled, doll-like creature, not flesh and blood, as when she was young, but still alive and still with aspects of freshness, still so unharridanlike, that a closeup without story or a role for her to play is perilous with other stories—our wishes, our memories, our jealousies, and her always obvious humanity. I mean, it has been obvious since "National Velvet," forty-nine years ago. She *was* playing a role in the awards, of course—that of a sixty-one-year-old woman loaded with jewels given to her by chubby, sloppy, high-powered men who found her passionate and amusing and world-class desirable, who adored the feisty and lusty and earthy girl-star and luminous animal, a dirty and indomitable spirit.

In the theatre, Streisand's speech was a dud—overrehearsed, self-conscious, small in scale. But Streisand, having studied and thought about the matter, and being aware of the ratio, roughly one-to-fifty, of television's power of representing size or space or emotional depth or elevation, didn't worry about the audience in the Chandler Pavilion or about theatrical reality or theatrical effect. She is deep into television representation: she had a significantly appropriate expression when she spoke in closeup; she had a serious and strong set of facial expressions and, clearly, the right voice. And the right movements of the voice. She had studied the tapes and used the rehearsal time well. The speech she wrote, the words she used suited that medium—and the closeup. On television, she was effective, dignified, persuasive, a knockout.

Pauline Kael has argued any number of times that movies have to be seen on large screens; they have to be big; and they're better if they're seen in full movie houses, if there is an actively responsive audience. It does seem that television can't convey the charge a movie carries. To push that a step further would be to say that television can't show what a movie star is—not in full, or even half, radiance and fascination.

In movies, nothing kills narrative quicker than an ill-judged closeup. Closeups are a slower range of time; they represent minor climaxes of perception on our part and minor or major climaxes of revelation on the part of the actor. Often the story makes you long to see the calculation or emotion of the actor, so that the closeup is like studying a face in life or is like a kiss or is subtly orgasmic.

Television consists blithely of a mind-obliterating surfeit of meaningless closeups, to animate the small screen. Most television theoreticians feel that we are constantly judging the honesty, the sincerity, of the face, and of the person behind the face, boring or entertaining us on the little screen. But a meaningless closeup of a star or a near-star is a kind of hell of exposure, in which what we as audience see is vanity and social class and pride. Mercedes Ruehl looked as if she were wearing furniture fabric and as if she weren't wearing makeup, which was interesting and unmovielike, bohemianly the wrong social class, not part of the country-club thing at all. No one has ever sported as complicated a haircut as the seemingly emotionally eviscerated, no-eyed, dim-lipped Richard Gere; at a rehearsal, his hair was so layered and fell in so many waves that it suggested the Sydney Opera House. On television, combed out, it was still elaborate enough to distract some of us so that we never entirely heard his fantasia on China and Tibet. Susan Sarandon in gold lamé looked villainous. Jane Fonda in some form-fitting swollen raincoat with half a million buttons suggested an unpleasant dominatrix.

A star in public, like the rest of us, is acting out something—sanity, let's say, or dignity, or sexiness. Most stars are so hypnotic that it almost becomes possible to forget that stars are likely to be the most restlessly competitive and uncontrollably destructive people you will ever meet. Consider their mischief, their self-righteousness, their psychic insensitivity to anything beyond their range. They can be and often are insupportable. And remember that stardom is more than ability or will, although will is a large part of it. A lot of what we react to and what draws us is courage, is reckless nerviness. Some of it is a predatory focus on being alive in the risk-laden, irreversible moment: Anjelica Huston coming offstage at one of the rehearsals and saying, "Oh, let's talk—I want to use this adrenaline high."

Two episodes, epigramlike, dealt in tangential ways with this matter of Hollywood stardom: the real thing, as stardom goes, is the Hollywood brand, with few exceptions. Emma Thompson gave one of the best acceptance speeches of the last two decades: clever, a bit dismissive, saying that she was honored to see in front of her the faces that had "entertained and influenced me and thrilled me," and half offering to give back the money that she had been paid for her performance in "Howards End." The famous faces didn't really respond to either remark. While intelligence is the rule in Hollywood, it tends to be a Hollywood intelligence, which is to say untranslatable, suspicious, uneasy, and parochial—pure Hollywood, country-clublike in its distrust of trained intelligence of an outside kind. Thompson did not offer her face in closeup. She twisted and turned and somehow masked her eyes. She seemed almost facially deformed: a set of dowdy tics, a performance potential, and not so much a woman at all. The American Academy gave Thompson's superb performance an Oscar, but the audience didn't seem to warm to her or to her unstarlike manner.

The other episode was provided by Federico Fellini. First, Sophia Loren appeared, the most ardently admired of the non-Nordic, non-country-club stars of the last few decades. She was wearing a version of the peignoir-type thing that Taylor was wearing. Then she introduced Marcello Mastroianni, in a supporting role to her own diva grandeur. Then there was the dreary montage. I suppose that's part of the hidden politics—not having a knockout Fellini montage that would have brought the audience to its feet roaring. And then Fellini appeared. What a sly-eyed, wrinkled, commanding face. What a scene-stealer. Or, if you like, alpha plus personality. With his first response to Loren, cutting into her speech, telling her drolly and commandingly that she could kiss him, and then moving his head, he obliterated her. Even with the eyes and the gown and the diva manner, he doused her in darkness. He erased Mastroianni. For a while now, we've known that among the greatest starring personalities are directors, whose abilities are visible to us only through their films, through the performances of others. But Fellini did it in the theatre, at a distance, and he did it epigrammatically—in a very small space—and did it so that it worked on television as well. He imposed his improvisatory timing and his wit and intelligence in a dominant yet modest, kingly yet Fellini-esque way. His eyes did not stay put but kept moving in non-starlike swivelling scans, almost comic, locating the cameras, judging the temperature of the audience. And, in a language not his own, Fellini stole the Oscar show. He seemed to prove that the artist-mind is, in a way, king, and that the director has final power, because he, or she, is finally not so self-consciously caught in a set persona as a star is.

I mean, his is not a famous face. Surgical intervention and a degree of youth were not the question. Even in terms of expression, he was not an actor, quite: his eyes never did behave for long. He was like a ghost or a road map or an abstract painting of stardom. And he was brief. His whole bit was seamless charm and grace, culminating with his thanking his wife, Giulietta Masina, whom he told to stop crying in a slightly climactic voice. And the cameras swung then to the star's face: she *was* crying. His performance flowed into credibility, into anecdotal greatness, with the real thing, her tears. He entered human credibility through her sweetly magnetic sentiment. Her crumpled joy. None of which was he capable of projecting. He needs a star.

FROM ZERO TO SIXTY
IN WHAT SEEMS LIKE EIGHT SECONDS FLAT

WITH Gil Cates and Jeff Margolis in the command truck, masterminding the television cameras and choosing and directing the flow of effects and images, Billy Crystal essentially ran the actual performance. His writers were working all during the show, coming up with lines. Crystal is free to do pretty much as he likes, to up the tempo or to slow it, to be silly or dignified, to be outrageous or to play it safe, but he has to react at once. If on television he seemed subdued this year, that was perhaps because he thought the show was going well and he didn't want to take too many chances. And perhaps he has become, for the moment, too much the insider and the big star, like Eastwood or Nicholson—a world male figure. It was in the brash, restless, maybe a bit shy role of the unlikely outsider—the short, not too famous outsider with a pie-pan face a little like the "Have a nice day" face, the outsider breaking in with our connivance and approval—that he did so well as a bridge between us and the glamour and oddity of the Oscars and stars in his first three years. In rehearsal this year, he was a lot livelier physically and he had some of that edge; he seemed then to be without self-love, to be a performance addict. But maybe in performance the size of the audience and the show-biz history got to him. He's more famous now than Bob Hope, after all.

It is nearly impossible to explain the self-consciousness about the size of the audience, the alertness to realities of popularity and success—and the obliviousness of other things—that go into the concentration that carries Crystal along in his performance. He is a borderline great performer, but he is given to holding back and to undoing his showier effects in a kind of pious modesty, a sort of self-anchoring in being a person, and not a star, in the end. He is determined not to be self-destructive. One of his writers remarked to me that Crystal and Kevin Costner are the two least self-destructive stars in Hollywood. Maybe we're gladiatorial, and we want our stars to risk emotional evisceration, insanity, exhaustion, public folly. Crystal constantly lessens the distance between him and us by falling back on schlock and merchandising himself as a sad ego full of longing for more prizes and glamour. It seemed to me in the theatre that the more Crystal presented himself as a famished Hollywood ego, the more the audience in the Pavilion liked it. I liked it, too. Of course, Crystal was doing two shows simultaneously—one in the Pavilion and one for the TV cameras that kept sniffing at him from the sides and back. For better or worse, his judgment came from the response in the auditorium and the general feeling backstage during the show that the show was going very well.

THE nature of what's at stake for us, even for me, in being part of this huge modern audience, and living in a time when this audience determines a good deal of cultural history, came to an obscure climax at Irving Lazar's party at Spago, a clumsily built stone-and-wood restaurant on a steep slope, with low ceilings and a view of L.A. Lazar's party begins as a dinner alternative to the awards performance. You watch the awards on small televisions scattered among the rooms. Some of the bosses are usually there, and a stray studio head with some actual power for the moment—and stars, new and old, and people from the East Coast. The Oscar winners come along after the show and after they've spent a few minutes with the press at the Governors' Ball—not the governor of California, but the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

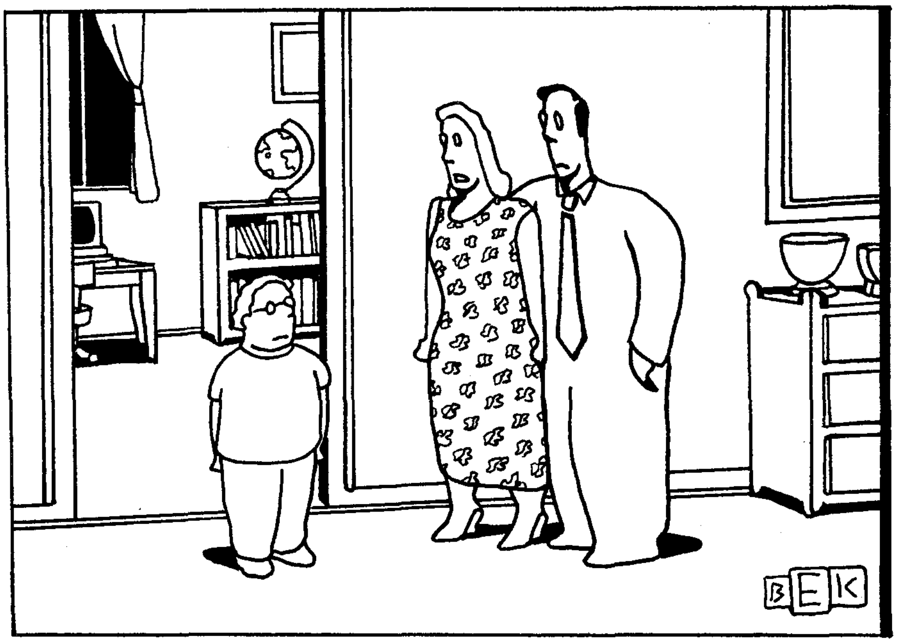
As always happens when I'm in a room full of powerful men, I needed a cigarette. Smoking reminds me of my youth, when it was O.K. to be a blank-faced bystander, an apprentice. The table I was at was a corner one, with Larry McMurtry, who wrote "Lonesome Dove," seen by twenty-five million people as a miniseries on TV. It was a good table; no one walked behind you. A guy looking party-bruised ducked into the corner of this corner and pulled out a pack of Marlboros. I excused myself from McMurtry and asked this guy for a cigarette. I lit up, and said, "I needed that. It makes me nervous being the least famous person in the room."

The guy said, "Yeah. I know."

At that moment, Lazar and Barbara Lazaroff, who is Wolfgang Puck's wife, and Elizabeth Taylor and a squat man carrying an Oscar arrived at the table. Larry Fortensky, Taylor's husband and the guy I'd unknowingly bummed a cigarette from, looks a little like a blond Richard Burton. He is clearly likable, with a clouded or overshadowed, nicely self-conscious quality of tenderness and a somewhat nervous manner. Taylor seated herself and started fiddling with her rings; she has very small hands, almost like squirrel paws. She dwindles to discretion in her hands and feet. She has unfortunate coloring for jewelry. None of the stones one can think of—sapphires, rubies, diamonds—really go with her eyes and hair and skin. She had on a remarkable, ice-cube-size emerald ring, but the green, except for being spectacularly impressive, didn't go with her eyes or her makeup. Her very black hair was heavily sprayed, and it looked sticky. It stuck out in a lot of directions and detracted from her very large yellow-and-white-diamond daisy necklace, which looked as if it needed cleaning. Her directness and impatience, the absence of hypocrisy, combined with her glamour, have a certain effect. The obviousness of her temper and her will and her undefeated air and a notable absence of any spiritual quality or yearning—the absence of anything transcendent at all—with her realist's quality of measuring and tasting what is there, her vigor, and her outrageous nerve become a form of sex appeal and beauty.

She seems to be someone who feels no embarrassment at all. Perhaps she gave up being embarrassed a long time ago. Someone at a nearby table remarked audibly, "Queen Liz." Taylor told the squat man where on the table to put the Oscar; she adjusted another ring on her small hands, bent backward very slightly and looked up at Lazar, who, standing, wasn't that much taller than she was seated; she flashed a smile of considerable power but of no personal significance except that it was large and radiant; she straightened up again, was serious, was warm. "I like my Oscars," she said to someone. She seemed entirely unrattled, unnervous, but when Lazar turned away she dipped her head briefly toward Fortensky's chest, and he touched her cheek with his lips and slipped her a bite of pizza.

Fortensky was tender toward her, with a slightly suffering quality of inheld



"We're neither software nor hardware. We're your parents."

strength. McMurtry leaned forward and told her how much he admired her speech at the Oscars.

I joined in, and said, "Yeah, it was a really good speech. It really turned the audience on."

Taylor looked at me, and it was unsettling, the directness, the swiftness of her decision to talk, her lack of fear. But so was the oddity of her beauty, of her good looks, and of the makeup. Her eye nearest me didn't seem to be pure violet but to be dark blue and partly purple and flecked with brown. She is a hell of a good-looking woman, and is piercingly and burningly alive, but the effect she has on someone my age is complex, because of the passing of time. Her image is complicated with the representation of time back to the late nineteen-forties.

She said of her speech, "Well, I'm used to being a fool. I can do it if there's a reason."

"I don't think you were a fool," I said. I wasn't being tactful—or guileful.

The aggression in Taylor seems to have nothing to do with ordinary ambitiousness but, rather, with her readiness to feel and with her sense of herself as overendowed, and wicked. In her speech she'd said that she knew that good, gentle Audrey (Hepburn) was in Heaven with her children but that her own job was to keep fighting down here, to be rowdy and aggressive—everything Hepburn was not—working for AIDS patients and for a cure. Her small, pretty voice is strongly projected in a narrow range; nothing in its familiar tones is without humor or color; but nothing in her voice suggests wit or any kind of mystic allure or music of longing. And nothing about her says, *I am a nice person.*

"Couldn't you tell that the audience was responding?" I asked her. "Where I was, people stood up. A real jolt of electricity went through the crowd around me."

"I didn't notice anything," she said. "I just did it. I wrote it myself." I understood her tone—and her eyes—to be saying that, if she wrote it, it was worthless, a throwaway. "I just did it."

Now I began to half-grin: "Oh, but surely by now you must know that you know a little bit about audiences."

She never took her eyes from mine; she set her breathing so that we were subtly in step with just a slight syncopation. "I don't know anything," she said. "I know my own limitations. Maybe."

"You don't know how to affect people?"

"As an actress, you mean?" Almost piteously but not whining: "It's been so long since I acted I don't know what I know."

She gives an impression of enormous personal force and will and of almost endlessly direct response—the here-and-now thing—and of a deep capacity for a kind of barking amusement. She's hardly middle class, and yet she is an archetype of a middle-class woman. I said she reminded me in her mere existence of my past. I meant my unreligious past, and how nearly everyone I knew had lived in the nineteen-fifties—the here-and-now thing and a distrust of what couldn't be physically known. Sunlight coming through the windows and making the college rooms warm, and oneself lying there and contemplating love versus chastity. We were all a lot like her. No one I knew gave a shit about Heaven or Hell. We wanted to live. We wanted to be young for a while—we had just barely escaped the war.

She, Elizabeth Taylor, embodies a lot of that reality which you will never tell your kids or grandchildren about. She is us, in that sense.

It can be argued that she reflected the times she lived in. But maybe she influenced them, too. Certainly her life, unsnobbish, hardly ethnocentric, filled with divorces and illness and material triumphs, with its political movements leftward and rightward, curiously mirrors the American decades from 1950 until now. She is us in more than one sense.

Leaving Spago, I followed Angie Dickinson down past the reporters grouped along the stairs. Kathy Bates was coming in, looking a bit whipped, walking slowly, with a large red AIDS doojigger on the lapel of her evening jacket.

"Kathy!" Angie Dickinson said. "Kathy! Kathy, it's Angie . . ."

It is like high school in a way, maybe as much as like a country club, this stuff with the stars.

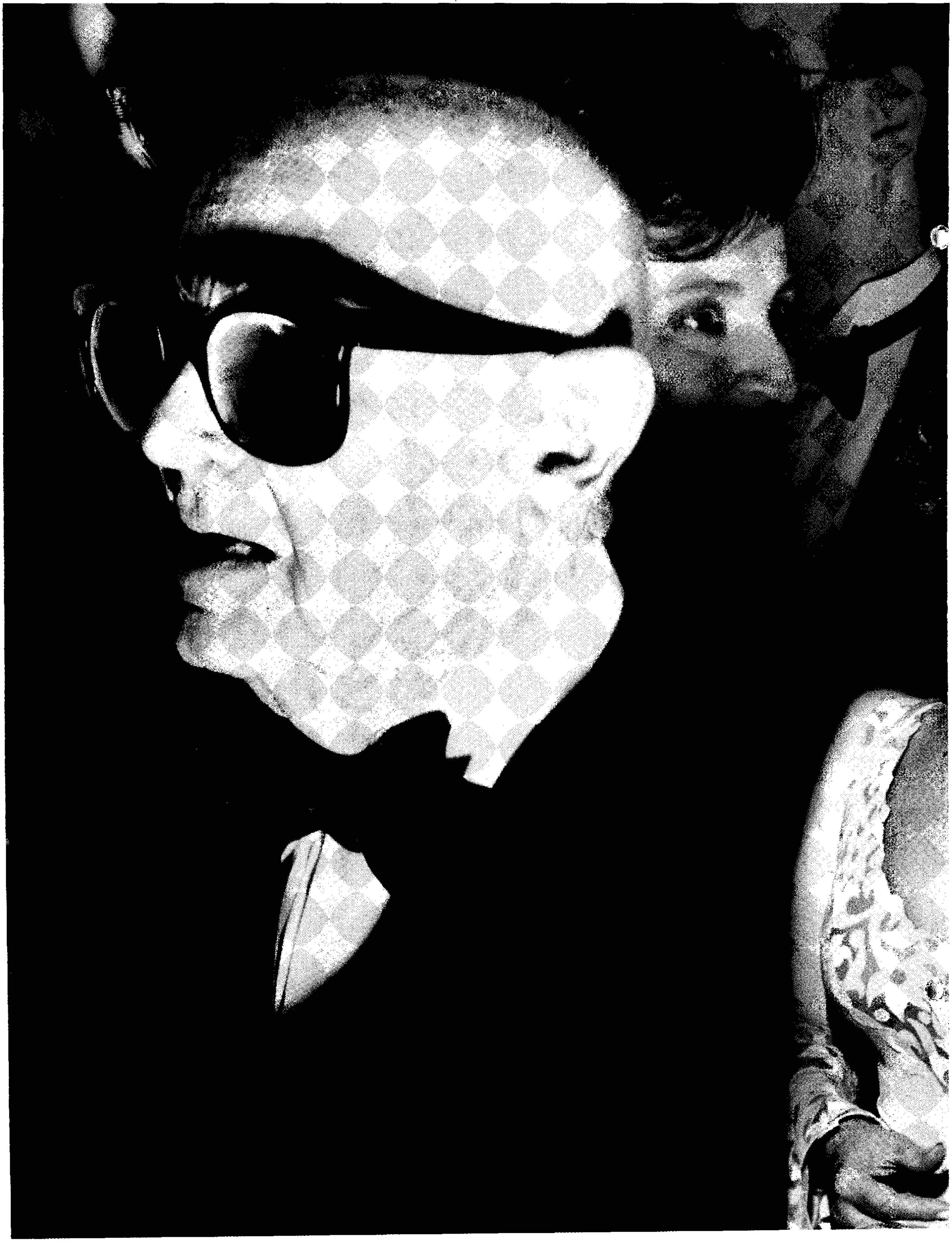
Outside, Los Angeles looked, as it often does, as if it were a piece of costume jewelry. It is strange how it has in this century almost unfailingly inspired apocalyptic images in writers and directors. It does strike me as being a city of avid and perpetual apocalypse and money-making and of overt sexuality and as being a place of great potency still largely beyond definition or clear description. And as being this more and more lastingly: the real home or center of what is worldwide middle-class right now. ♦

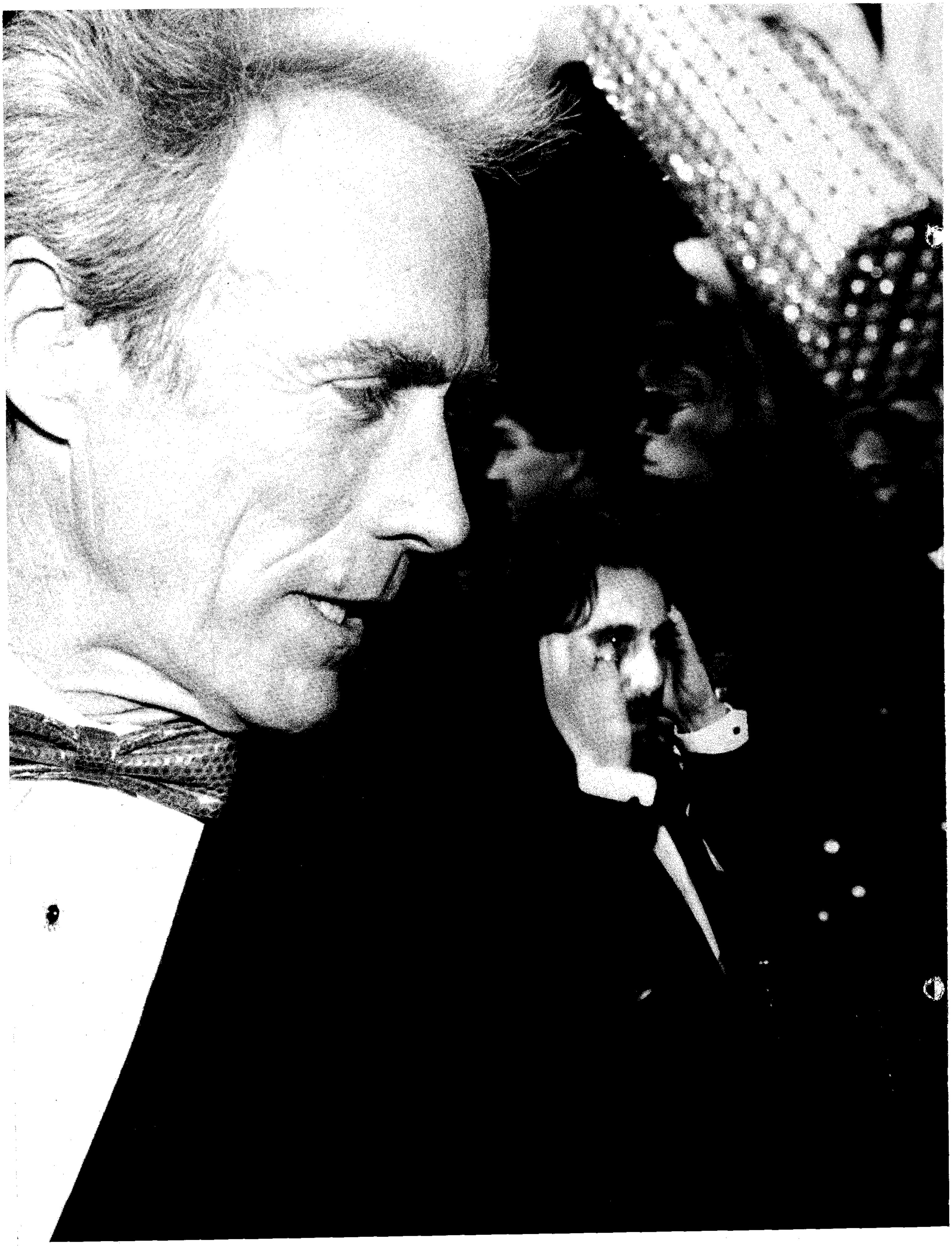
PORTFOLIO

A NIGHT AT THE OSCARS

BY RICHARD AVEDON

Andie MacDowell, Adolph Green, Dennis Hopper,
Irving (Swifty) Lazar, Elizabeth Taylor, Jack Nicholson,
Clint Eastwood, Al Pacino, Sharon Stone





A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE LAST CRANES OF SIBERIA

The cranes of Asia are facing extinction amid Russia's economic anarchy, as multinational corporations and local entrepreneurs plunder the natural resources of Siberia's Amur Basin. Now environmental delegates from Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, and the United States are putting aside national disputes in the fight to save the region's endangered species.

BY PETER MATTHIESSEN

ON a rare clear day—the first day of summer—as I fly the Bering Strait from the Yukon Delta toward the Diomede Islands and the Chukotski Peninsula, it excites me to imagine this gray, sun-silvered sea from the view on high of the great cranes, more particularly, the golden eye of the Crane from the East, as the Canadian, or sandhill, crane of North America is known in its western breeding territory, in Siberia. Even the airplane's altitude, of thirty thousand feet, might prove no obstacle to the sandhill, which commonly migrates a mile above the earth, and whose smaller relative, the demoiselle crane, has been seen in airy passage of the snow peaks of the Himalayas at twenty-six thousand feet.

That the cranes of the world appear to travel at astonishing altitudes accounts for their ubiquity in the earliest legends of the world as messengers and harbingers of highest heaven. In Cree legend, Crane carries Rabbit to the moon; and Aesop extolls the crane's singular ability "to rise above the clouds into endless space, and survey the wonders of the heavens, as well as of the earth beneath, with its seas, lakes, and rivers, as far as the eye can reach." In China and Japan, the red-crowned crane—largest and, by all accounts, most beautiful of the world's cranes—has represented longevity and good fortune since ancient times. It is also the most celebrated bird in all world cultures, appearing in all sorts of art forms, designs, and motifs, and on royal robes and kimonos. Being faithful to their mates (it is alleged), the red-crowneds also bedeck wedding cakes and anniversary cards. Indeed, they are granted a spiritual dimension, with heaven-bound sages commonly depicted riding on a crane, or even assuming the crane's beautiful form for their arrival in the clouds of immortality.

The Arctic air numbs the bright-red skin on the sandhill's crown; the long, stiff wings creak on the wind. As a family, the first cranes appeared some fifty million years ago, and the sandhill crane, whose bones turn up among Wyoming fossils ten million years old, is the most ancient bird species on earth. The world's great cranes stir the imagination not only because they are the oldest and the largest of the earth's flying creatures or because the horn notes of their voices summon man's attention to his own swift passage but because they symbolize like no other living things the disappearing expanses of clean water, earth, and air upon which their species—and ours, too, though we learn it very late—must ultimately depend for survival.

The brown coast falls away in the bright mists, and there is only the rotted pack ice and gray shallow seas of the vanished land bridge between the continents. "The flight of cranes, the way they form letters" was noted by the poet Hyginus. Ovid attributed the invention of letters to the god Mercury after watching cranes fly. Like wild geese, cranes often fly in V formation, having had long ages and many millions of miles of buffeting by the great winds to absorb the aerodynamic limitations of—let's say—the letter H.

Soon the Diomede Islands—one in the New World, one in the Old—drift off in northern mists and are replaced by Siberian barrens of the Chukotski Peninsula, home of the Chukot, or Chukchi, aborigines, who share an ancient ancestry with the Inuit. Even in late June, the mountain tundra of Chukotski looks wintry, with hard wind-worn snow in the ravines.

The Arctic distances flown at such altitudes by birds shame the seat-bound traveller on Alaska Airlines. Peering out from my plastic aerie over the firmament of wind and light, mightily stirred by the unspoiled world beneath, I strive to experience with Goethe (or with Faust, at least) how "it is inborn in every man that his feeling should press upward and forward . . . when over precipitous fir-clad heights the eagle floats with wings outspread, or over flatlands, over seas, the crane sweeps onward toward its home": the German word is *Heimgang* or "home going"—to the virgin earth, the lost paradise at the source of all man's yearnings.

Following old migration instincts, the sandhill will descend each spring to this peninsula, and may continue west along the Arctic coast some fifteen hundred miles to the Yana River, where its breeding grounds border upon those of the Siberian crane.

IN the clear weather, one can see a stretch of Kamchatka, that primordial peninsula of volcanoes and bears, of lakes, meadows, swift cold streams, and hard, bright coast, like a last stronghold of the Ice Age. From Kamchatka's tip, the Kurile Islands bend away in a long arc, all the way to Hokkaido, the north island of Japan.

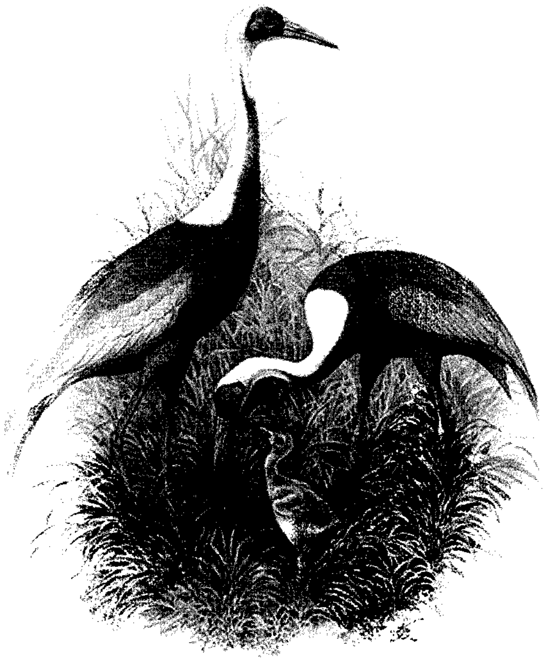
The plane continues south and west, and descends to refuel at Magadan, on the mainland coast, where snow still patches the low and barren Dzhugdzhur range. Beyond the mountains, the spruce taiga stretches westward, in a boreal forest of well over two million square miles, estimated to contain more than half of the conifers, more than one-third of the hardwoods, and about one-fifth of all the trees on earth.

From Magadan the airplane heads south over the Okhotsk Sea, which is all but walled off from the Pacific by Kamchatka, Sakhalin Island, the Kuriles, and Hokkaido. The Siberian coastline emerges once again where the delta of the Amur River, spreading away in a vast emptiness between sea and mountains, glitters in the sun of eastern Asia.

Two years ago, I explored Lake Baikal, in south central Siberia, but this was my first journey to the Russian Far East—more specifically, to the Amur Basin, which also includes large regions of China. The Amur, all but unknown in the West, is the great river of northeast Asia and, at 2,705 miles, drains a watershed of 716,200 square miles on its journey from Mongolia to the Pacific. Despite the enormous floodplains of the lower river, only five per cent of the Amur Basin is under water, since most of the terrain farther inland rises in small, ancient mountains and upland forest, containing immense resources in timber and minerals. The mighty Amur, unrolling beneath the wings as the airplane starts its long descent to Khabarovsk, is as singular and precious as Baikal itself, the largest free, wild, unbridged, undammed river left on earth.

With its tributary the Ussuri, the Amur defines the Russo-Chinese northeast frontier, all the way from the Mongolian steppes of Central Asia to great Lake Khanka, on the border between northeastern China—formerly Manchuria, now the province of Heilongjiang—and far southeastern Siberia, known as Ussuri Land. For a century, the disputed frontier has prevented extensive settlement along the river, known to the Russians as Dear Father Amur (as in Mother Volga, Mother Lena) and to the Chinese as Heilong Jiang, or Black Dragon River. But in recent years, with the easing of hostilities, the ecology of the entire basin has become threatened by precipitate development, not only by Russians and Chinese but by multinational timber and mining interests seeking to loot eastern Siberia; unfortunately, the verb is not too strong. In these times, Russia is too fragmented and chaotic to protect its resources, not only from ruthless corporations but from its own entrepreneurs. Local officials, politicians, private citizens, and even the military, all seeking shelter from the myriad uncertainties, are selling off every asset that is not nailed down.

Among the rare forms of East Asian wildlife most seriously threatened by the new surge of development are the white-naped and the red-crowned, or Manchurian, cranes. To understand better what might be done to help offset the decline, I was on my way to an international environmental conference on the Amur Basin, to be held aboard a ship on a river voyage north and west to the crane-breeding territories in the floodplains of the middle Amur. From the Amur I would return south to Lake Khanka, where, it is hoped, the Russians and the Chinese will establish an international refuge for endangered cranes. Since all the migratory cranes breed in more than one Asian country and winter in two or three others, their survival depends on international coöperation of the kind brought by Canada and the United States to the return from near-extinction of the whooping crane, which came back from a mere fifteen birds a half century ago to a present population of well over two hundred, with about a hundred and forty living in the wild. After the whooper, the red-crowned is the rarest crane on earth; the species now numbers only fourteen or fifteen hundred, including a non-migratory population in Japan.



The white-naped crane is one of four rare species of crane which rely on the wilderness of eastern Siberia.

VIKTOR BAKHTIN

The Amur Basin environmental conference was co-sponsored by Russia's Socio-Ecological Union (representing about sixty environmental groups) and by the International Crane Foundation and National Audubon Society of the United States, with the tacit support of such other United States organizations as Baikal Watch (a project of the Earth Island Institute), the Wilderness Society, and the Siberian Forest Protection Project. These organizations were already at work in the Lake Baikal region and had now joined with Russian organizations for the protection of the Amur-Ussuri, and all were to be represented at the Amur conference. China, Japan, and South Korea also sent delegates.

The first part of the conference took place at the Bolshoi Khekhtsir Reserve, near the Ussuri-Amur confluence south of Khabarovsk. The Amur Basin's hard-pressed *zapovedniki*, or wildlife reserves, are seeking ways to reconcile protection of the animals with forestry, eco-tourism, and other compromises that have become necessary for survival, and the conference opened at Bolshoi Khekhtsir so that the *zapovednik* directors might participate. Many of the Russian reserves—as I learned to my surprise—were created seventy years ago, in the days of Lenin, and have been closely protected ever since, even from the public. But in this dark time of economic anarchy the regional governments are selling off mineral and timber leases, oil and gas exploration and development and even hunting and fishing rights, with little or no regard for the concept of sustainable development, let alone wildlife or wilderness preservation. There is even a rumor of negotiations with the Japanese for concession rights to the crystal water of Lake Baikal.

The coördinator of the conference was Dr. Sergei Smirenski, of the Socio-Ecological Union—a tall, gaunt Russian in a hurry, always exhausted, like the last crusader in the hopeless cause of Mother Russia. He was an eloquent defender of the Amur region, in which he has spent a good deal of time, and could speak firsthand of, for example, skirmishes with aggressive brown bears, one of which once drove him over a small cliff as he fired a gun in a vain effort to hold it at bay.

Smirenski's co-director for the symposium, known officially as the International Workshop on Cranes and Storks of the Amur Basin, was Dr. George W. Archibald, the head of the International Crane Foundation. Although the I.C.F., which is based in Baraboo, Wisconsin, has pioneered captive-breeding techniques for fourteen of the world's fifteen crane species, Archibald is more concerned these days with conserving the wild populations. A native of Nova Scotia, he is a round-faced man of forty-six with an affable, puckish manner that hides a very firm sense of direction.

Archibald is a leading authority on the phylogeny of cranes. Like most authorities, he believes that the genus *Grus*, which includes ten or eleven of the fifteen crane species (depending upon how one classifies the Siberian crane), probably developed here, in well-watered East Asia, where no high east-west ranges or deserts impede the birds' long migrations. Indeed, four of the rarest species—the red-crowned, white-naped, hooded, and Siberian cranes—are rarely encountered anywhere else. If one includes occasional sightings of the sandhill, seven species occur here in the Amur Basin, which is not only the heartland of this realm of Asian cranes but the only region in the world where, in certain places, six species may turn up within a single year. Considering that only one crane species occurs in Europe and only two occur in North America (South America has none), a more auspicious site for an international crane conference could scarcely have been imagined.

Though Archibald has explored most of the crane habitats on earth, this was his first visit to the Russian side of the Amur Basin, which, like most of Siberia, had been closed to foreigners for many years. Therefore, he had never seen the Russian population of the red-crowned crane, *Grus japonensis*, which among all the crane species, he said, "excites me most."

In East Asia, political instability is an important obstacle to the future of wildlife, and of the cranes especially, and, observing the delegates to the Amur conference, one could imagine all sorts of opportunities for trouble. A profound mistrust between Russia and China began with czarist expansion into Asia in the nineteenth century and was made permanent by the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which was forged across the Central Asian states and along the borders of Mongolia and Manchuria. Hard feeling culminated in the Boxer Rebellion, of 1900, against the European nations that were seizing the main Asian ports and commandeering Asian commerce. These "foreign devils," the Chinese said, had upset the natural harmonies of life, bringing fires, flood, and drought, and to this day the Russians represent an unwelcome European presence on the Chinese border. In the Chinese view, the Russians have no more business in the Amur Basin than did the Japanese, who made a puppet kingdom (Manchukuo) of Manchuria in the nineteen-thirties, when Korea was already under their control. In addition, Russia has chronic trouble with Japan over the Kuriles, which the Soviet Union seized after the Japanese defeat in 1945; South Korea's latest grievance against Japan is for its failure to acknowledge forcible conscription of Korean girls as "comfort women" for Japanese troops when Korea was colonized by Japan, between 1910 and 1945; and China has an unpleasant memory of Korean War hostilities with South Korea, where the Amur's red-crowned and white-naped cranes often winter in marshes of the demilitarized zone. All these countries, needless to say, share mixed feelings about the United States.

The Japanese at the conference did not take sides, and they moved unobtrusively—all the more so because their government was still withholding aid to the new Russia until the Russians agreed to relinquish the four Kurile Islands. (On this ship, to be sure, we were bird men first and nationalists second, and even the Japanese delegates suspected that it might be better for the cranes if Russia kept the Kuriles, being less inclined to drain crane-breeding areas to construct golf courses.) While endorsing the principle of international reserves in Russia and China, the Japanese were here mainly to underwrite a land lease to the Socio-Ecological Union that would protect *Grus* breeding territory at Muravyovka, farther up the Amur.

ON July 4, 1992, we were bused to Khabarovsk, a large industrial city of the Soviet era; from there, the

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BEFORE SPUYTEN DUYVIL

Who marvelled twenty years ago at the lights
at night, the lights on or in the water?

The train went by, before
and after. At how people *lived* in the

hidden ruin and during the day came
out to go on about their business among such

ruins as this. What we believed would be changed
has not been changed. General pity

is gone, too, or is impatience. Each light makes
a four-foot post of light in the water

just as before, and the inner workings above them
just as invisible.

Cool red sandstone and brick by daylight:
a stage-set for boys, rubble played on.

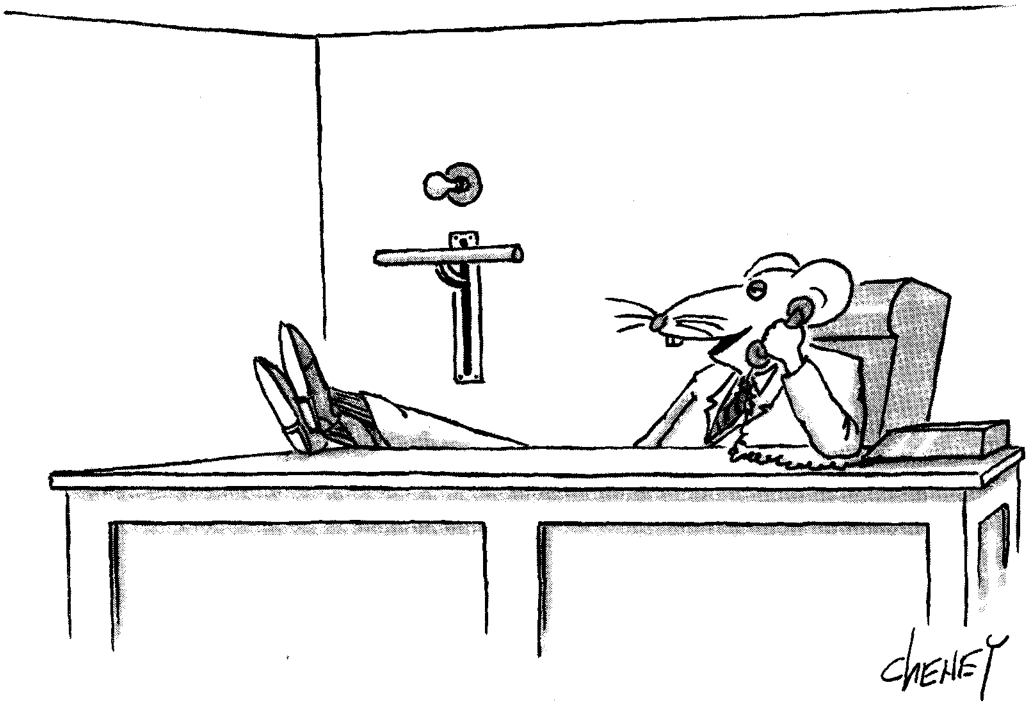
Here, cold freshet, take this chemical.
Nobody knows you fish this stream.

You're seen by no one
of any power.

Enough to think it romantic to wonder?
Not to figure out what to do.

—ELIZABETH MACKLIN

chartered river steamer, the V. Poyarkov, would bear us northwest for seven hundred miles to the Amur's confluence with the Zeya River. The day was white and hot and humid, with dirty smog from the stacks and factories downriver. The city's central square, with its sterile white Party headquarters and Lenin statue, appeared more lonely than oppressive, but Khabarovsk is considerably less decrepit in appearance than Russian cities farther west: it has well-kept streets and a fine waterfront park and public beach. On the broad river, oceangoing ships moored in the current seemed to await the brave new days of capitalist commerce. Already, Han Chinese peddlers were crossing the river from Heilongjiang to sell clones of American sneakers, jeans, T-shirts, soft drinks, and rock music in the Khabarovsk market.



"Oh, not bad. The light comes on, I press the bar, they write me a check. How about you?"

• •

Like the city, the V. Poyarkov was named for a seventeenth-century cossack explorer who helped to extend the Russian Empire from the Urals all the way to the Pacific, absorbing the old Mongol kingdoms and sowing among Asian peoples a mistrust and enmity that have not entirely subsided to this day. A handsome white ship with clean and spacious decks, the V. Poyarkov was 250 feet long with a draft of 5.7 feet—a bit deep, muttered Captain Viktor Slusar, for the upper river in this year of tardy rains. Under the new Russian flag (a simplified version of the czarist white-blue-and-red tricolor), we sailed at noon, heading upstream past Great Ussuri Island to the point where the large Ussuri River flows into the Amur from the south. Toward 4 P.M., we reached the confluence—a broad stretch where Russian and Chinese gunboats, which looked like torpedo boats, crisscrossed the river. When the Amur became the border between countries, in the middle of the nineteenth century, it was considered a Russian river to which the Chinese had free access, and this state of affairs persisted until the end of the nineteen-sixties. Then hostility increased, and the Soviet Union claimed control of the Amur to both banks, calling this action a response to the natural aggressiveness of the Chinese. ("They were acting as if Russia were some small place on the border between China and Finland," one of the Russians in our group told me.) But after a series of bloody skirmishes, in one of which two hundred Russians died, the Soviet Union withdrew its claim, and even yielded jurisdiction over its own north bank in certain stretches, no longer permitting its settlers to use boats or to fish, or even swim. On being asked how the government could have agreed to such a thing, Sergei Smirenski shook his head in profound bewilderment and sighed, "Russia."

BEYOND the mouth of the Ussuri, guard towers rise along low willow banks, the only sign of man in miles and miles of empty river. The north bank is Siberia and the south is Heilongjiang Province. Heilongjiang contains much of what is left of China's hardwood forests, and government plans for vast development of the entire region include the cutting of several hundred million board feet of timber in the next ten years. This great plain has been designated the "northern food basket" of China, and has already lost half its wetlands to drainage, large-scale clear-cutting, and agriculture. Until recent years, there were no towns and only a few Manchurian villages, but now the Manchurians have mostly been absorbed by Han Chinese.

The Russians, too, are earnestly engaged in unrestrained timbering and clearing, but they have more forest and fewer people and, being so desperate for hard currency, they are eager to sell to the Chinese their share of the huge amount of hydroelectric power that might be developed by building a network of dams across the Amur and its tributaries.

A bargeload of logs descended the river—bound for export, so the Russians said, with a wince suggesting that the very soul of great Sibir, the Silent Land, is now for sale. The situation was made worse, they said, by the rapacity of foreign corporations—"the vultures," Sergei Smirenski called them bitterly, "who will devour all they can get."

In the Baikal region, the logging is domestic and is devoted largely to supplying fuel for the region's pulp and paper mills, but there, too, enormous areas of taiga forest are being cut, with accompanying pollution. There is also considerable pollution from mills and mines, and there is disruption of the rivers from hydropower dams such as a huge complex at Bratsk, on the Angara, which drains Lake Baikal into the Yenisey River and the Arctic Ocean. The situation in the far north is no better. Ivan

ROCKY ROAD, PRIVATE EYE
We ain't dealin' with sprinkles and sundaes, sister! Do the words "italian ice" ring any bells?
Shanahan

Dyachovsky, of the Yakuts people, who was attending the conference as a local expert on the Siberian crane, now spends much of his time fighting the mining pollution of Yakutia's rivers in order to protect the main staging areas on the cranes' migration routes. Because of the failed economy, Russia is feverishly mining gold to obtain hard currency, he said, and extensive drilling for oil and gas is being planned. For the moment, what protects most of inner Siberia is the vast distances and utter inaccessibility of an all but roadless taiga that is mud-rutted, or snowbound much of the year.

Everywhere, the river swarmed with Chinese fishermen in high-prowed open skiffs with archaic outboards. In a misty sunrise, some fishermen setting gill nets along the Russian bank swung up alongside a Russian patrol boat to cadge cigarettes from its crew, with smiles and banter on both sides, and as I watched them it seemed too bad that the august delegations aboard ship could not relax in the way of common people, who do not formulate grand policies, just live or die for them. At meals and at other times, despite brave efforts by the conference organizers and our gallant translators, the national groups stubbornly kept to themselves, with a solitary South Korean delegate a kind of wild card. A few of the Japanese, Russians, and the fifteen-odd Americans were willing to mix it up a little more, but the language barriers proved too wearisome, the constructed conversations mostly boring, and, in the end, each delegate returned gratefully to the chatter of his own countrymen. And yet some barriers did break down, as the result of a general and growing interest—excitement, even—in the concept of international reserves that would so clearly benefit the Amur Basin. Besides a proposed Russo-Chinese reserve along Lake Khanka, there was much discussion of another in the Amur headwaters, which would include China's Lake Dalai Nur Reserve, the Daurski Reserve in Siberia, and a new reserve across the border from Daurski in Mongolia, to which I would travel with Jim Harris, of the I.C.F., later in the month. Toward dusk on the second day out, an Oriental white stork (a species already virtually extinct in Japan and Korea) was spotted from the conference-room windows. The lone white bird was crossing the river from China into Russia, as if to remind the delegates to put aside antagonisms and self-interest for a more balanced, one-world view.

Behind both banks lay broad savanna country—rank grasslands set about with wooded islands of pale willow and black oak. One could not see far, because the banks were high and the broad brown river was already so low that sandbars formed everywhere one looked. One morning, seven or eight white storks were observed here and there along the river. Though we had reached the region of the middle Amur, which red-crowned and white-naped cranes use for breeding grounds, none had been sighted.

That afternoon, we went ashore at Amurzet. It is in "the Jewish Autonomous Region," as some maps call it, for that is the official name, bestowed in unholy apparatchik cynicism. According to the local lore, Jews from Ukraine and elsewhere were transported here to settle a dread wilderness during the vast purges and enforced famines of the mid-thirties, and a very large number froze or starved to death, as was intended. Some of the survivors moved away or emigrated to Israel, and today Jewish families make up less than five per cent of the local population.

From Amurzet, a village of small board and log houses shaded by the dark cottonwoods and dull-leaved poplars of Siberia, a dirt road led through huge communal fields of potatoes, soybeans, and wheat to a river floodplain and wet prairie abounding in wildflowers—gold-and-purple Siberian iris, yellow daylily, red campion, lavender geranium, blue cranesbill, purple vetch, a wonderful white bog orchid, meadows of daisies, and, here and there, a brilliant-yellow flower called the Beautiful Lily. Five storks stalked a wet swale in single file. An immense stork nest filled the wide fork of an oak, and more nests adorned old survey towers. Other birds were numerous—reed warblers and chestnut-eared buntings, a garganey teal, a pair of pearl-gray Eurasian cuckoos, a striking black Amur falcon darting away across the marsh.

The first cranes we observed were a pair of white-napeds, flying upwind over distant woods with strong upward flicks of their great wings. This superb species, silvery-gray and white, with the bare red skin on the head which characterizes ten species of the genus *Grus*, is almost as large and at least as beautiful as the red-crowned crane—or so I told myself, having yet to lay eyes upon the latter.

As the ship moved north and west, the prairie lands of Amurzet gave way to low hills and mountain forest, and here and there we saw blackened land and small wildfires, a serious threat in this dry year. The world's worst forest fire in three centuries was the Dahinggan fire—known in the West as the Black Dragon fire—which broke out in Heilongjiang in May of 1987, after a dry winter, and burned for twenty days, consuming villages and joining other fires across the river in Siberia, where it closed a regional airport for two weeks with its shroud of smoke. According to Harrison Salisbury, who wrote a book on it, the Black Dragon fire was many times the size of the Yellowstone fire of the following year, and destroyed eighteen million acres of taiga. More than two-thirds of the burn was in Siberia, yet the Russians made no attempt to stop it, first, because, with the drought and high winds, a fire in a roadless land could not be stopped, and, second, because the forests would grow back, they said, long before there was any need to cut them down.

For China, with its starkly diminished forests, the Dahinggan fire was a catastrophe, wiping out a third of the country's last great timber reserve. The Minister of Forestry was summarily removed for having failed to cut corridors through the parched tracts or to have equipment ready. Though a few bulldozers were used, the fire was fought mainly with wet burlap bags wielded by thousands of soldiers and conscripts. More than two hundred people died, with nearly as many injured.

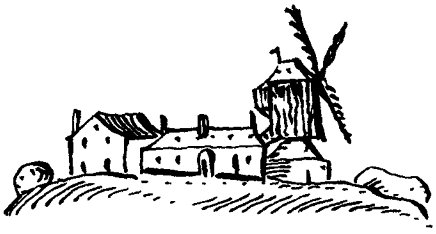
SERGEI SMIRENSKI, staring away from the ship's rail, reflected on his experiences in the Khingan forests, where he lived for months at a time while he was doing his doctoral dissertation in the early seventies. Although both red-crowned and white-naped cranes bred in the lowlands just upriver from the Khingan Mountains, they had never been studied systematically or received any protection. Smirenski and a colleague, Sergei Vinter, recognizing the marshes along the widely braided river as crane habitat, fought successfully to have the wetlands added to the Khinganski Nature Reserve: it was expanded to its present form in 1977.

Knowing the Amur Basin perhaps as well as any man alive, Smirenski is distressed and profoundly agitated by the free-for-all timbering in the region, which, in addition to its rare birds, has black bears in the mountains and brown bears on the plains, lynx and the Amur cat, and sable, ermine, and the yellow-throated marten, a big arboreal weasel that hunts in family parties. The Amur, he noted, has been logged since the late-nineteenth century, but most of the clearing has occurred in recent decades. There are very few towns along the river, but more will come, in consequence not only of the logging but of the new Baikal-Amur Railroad, a northern spur of the Trans-Siberian, which had laid open the taiga between Irkutsk and Khabarovsk in just five years. The accompanying disruption and the raw new towns, which have already polluted the north end of Lake Baikal, were attended by hordes of crows and magpies, to the great harm of native bird life. On the Chinese side, from all reports, timber clearing and development promise to be even more intensive, and much damage has already been done.

Entering a hundred-mile gorge through the Khingan foothills, the ship passed through the narrows where the Khinganski Dam is to be built across the Amur. The heat had thickened, and the mist, and down the canyon, between rounded headlands, the wind came in sudden buffets, raising white ridges on the current. The wind bore a strong scent of lime from the flowering linden trees in the mountain forests.

Sun and shadow, whisperings of rain, a live silver shimmering in the brown river like uncoiling snakes. The squall passed, and the air cleared, already cool. Cormorants, terns, and tall gray herons took up stations along the banks like river sentinels.

BEFORE seven the next morning, Sergei Smirenski rushed out onto the deck where the early bird-watchers among us—Stephen Bouffard, of the Fish and Wildlife Service; Ken Strom, of National Audubon; and I—prowled, along the rails, on the watch for cranes. Pointing to Chinese fishermen, Smirenski cried, "Do you see that? Fishing out of season! According to their own agreement with this country, they are not to fish during the spawning season! And I have spoken to the Chinese about it, and they pay no attention!" Throwing his hands in the air, he rushed back inside, probably to consult with George Archibald, who at this preprandial hour was usually to be found presiding over ecological discussions in the forward salon.



Smirenski deplored the fine-mesh nets that the Chinese use, in order to drag even the smallest salmon from the river. He had counted more than a thousand nets between Khabarovsk and Amurzet, he said, and he claimed that the employees of two hatcheries near Amurzet were out of work that year because not a single spawning fish had reached them. Such practices are responsible not only for the ruin of the salmon runs in the Russian tributaries but also for the decline of the *kaluga*, or Amur sturgeon—the largest sturgeon in the world, weighing two thousand pounds and more. To make matters worse, strong chemicals from gold-mining operations and from the agriculture on both banks pollute these rivers. But he hates especially the prospect of the proposed Khinganski Dam, which threatens to flood the Khinganski Reserve.

Later in the morning, Smirenski gave an impassioned talk against the dam. Though most of the Japanese and the Americans were present, his words appeared to be directed at the few Chinese delegates who had turned up for his presentation. "In 'conquering' this wild river," Smirenski said, "the engineers will not tame it, they will kill it." The Khinganski Dam was first conceived back in the fifties, in the days of Sino-Soviet solidarity against "capitalist running dogs." We should do something with our great river—that was the only inspiration, Sergei said. The idea perished with the chilling of relations a few years later, and only recently has China sought to resurrect it, in the light of the vast energy required for the swift development of Heilongjiang.

For the Chinese engineers, the advantages of the Khinganski Dam are

rapid flow, low anticipated costs, and large anticipated profits. The engineers maintain that the increase in water level would be small and that salmon ladders and restocking would insure that the fish harvest would decline by no more than five per cent.

Unfortunately, restocking fish is inefficient and expensive, and salmon ladders are generally ineffective for other species. Also, the currents that salmon need to follow would be affected, and the chances are that many fish would die in the dam turbines. As for sturgeon, they are very particular about water temperature, rate of flow, and a clear river bottom, all of which would be drastically transformed in the lake behind the dam, with its accumulating sediment, up to thirty-three feet deep. The *kaluga*, which requires eighteen years to mature, spawns almost entirely in the dam-site region, and the estimated loss of these fish would be eighty per cent, Smirenski said.

Because of the monsoon rains, the Amur is high in the late summer, when other rivers are low. Inevitably, the dam would raise the water level at the wrong season for many species of flora and fauna. Despite the claims of the engineers, Smirenski said, the reservoir could not help raising the groundwater level in the Khinganski Reserve and thereby changing the plant community, with unknown effect upon the fauna. "Whether we shoot them, flood their nests, or destroy their habitat, we will destroy the cranes!" he cried, with great emotion.

Indeed, he added, the proposed dam threatens critical habitats of many other endemic and endangered species, including the Oriental white stork, Blakiston's fish owl, and the Chinese merganser. For many such species, the Khingan region lies at the edge of a scattered and diminished range, so their survival is already tenuous. If the salmon go, the fish owl and the merganser will go, too.

Smirenski said despairingly, "To this the engineers say, 'So what? Let them go somewhere else if they don't like it.' But, of course, there is nowhere else for them to go."

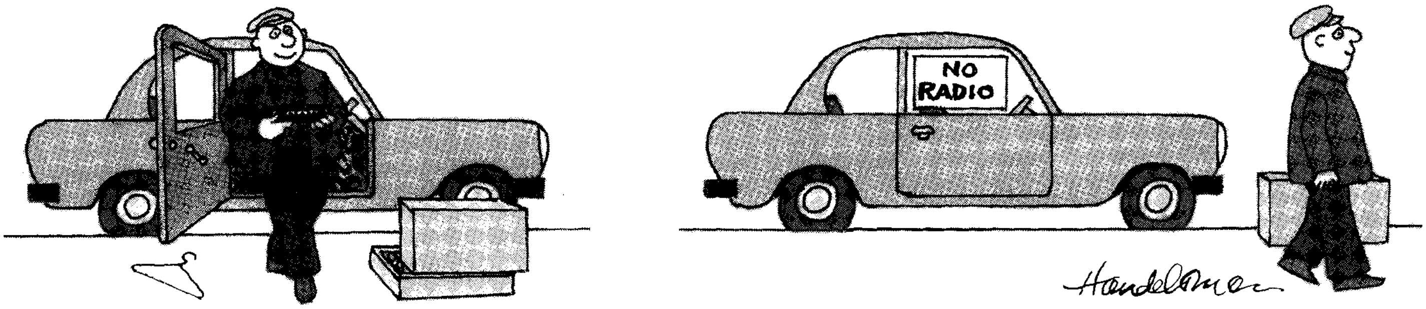
Dr. Ma Yiqing, the director of the zoology department of the Institute of Natural Resources, in Harbin (Heilongjiang's capital), who has worked for many years in Heilongjiang and is a leading authority on the red-crowned crane, agreed with Smirenski that both salmon and sturgeon have been drastically reduced by man's activities; he noted that in the nineteen-fifties the Chinese made an annual harvest of "several million" salmon, whereas by the nineteen-sixties only about sixty thousand were being taken, and today but "a few thousand." However, he said quickly (did I catch a glance over his shoulder at his colleagues?), the Chinese government has established two nature reserves for salmon and sturgeon spawning. None of the rest of us were quite sure what this might mean. Though it has been officially announced that the dam (which is known in China as Taipingtau, or Peaceful Groove Channel) will have little direct impact on the Khinganski Nature Reserve, Ma said that he had talked with a Chinese engineer who agreed entirely with the anti-dam data presented that morning by the Russians, and that he himself could only shrug in the face of such a paradox. However, he added, the engineer's reaction to the data had been different. "Never mind," the engineer had apparently told Ma. "We'll build it anyway, because only with electricity can we bring light to human society. And this way we'll have electricity with minimum impact on the environment, since the alternatives are nuclear power and fossil fuel. It would be a waste of the Black Dragon River not to use this energy."

"Isn't it time we started thinking of other sources of power, other bases for the economy?" Smirenski demanded. Dam engineers, Chinese or Russian, were able to see problems only from their own very narrow point of view, he said. He referred to them dismissively as "the hydro-Mafia."

For their part, the *zapovednik* managers complained that the Chinese were preoccupied with precise figures and statistics at the expense of meaningful ecological data from the field. Despite recommendations from the conference organizers, they pointed out, none of the Chinese who attended had come with suitable dress for the outdoors—most wore street shoes and white shirts even in the field—and only about three had brought binoculars (which are scarce in China). The managers claimed to perceive in the Chinese a hostility toward the untamed nature that the Russian people love, and maintained that the Chinese had lost touch with it, having destroyed most of it in their own country.

Harris agreed. "The Chinese like the idea of nature as an abstraction, as a metaphor—that is why it is prominent in their art—but the reality makes them uneasy," he said. "They have no experience of wilderness, and far less of wild creatures, which suffered a great deal during the Cultural Revolution."

Perhaps I make too much of it, but two weeks later a taxi-driver at the Beijing airport would cry out in real consternation at the discovery of a pinkish gecko that had somehow survived square miles of concrete to find refuge on his windshield. Before I could protest, he had mashed it to death with his windshield wipers, then turned to me with a smile of relief and triumph, as if he had slain a dragon; that same day, in the Forbidden City, where outside the Hall of Supreme Harmony two beautiful



bronze cranes stalk the high terrace, a youth tried frantically to obliterate a harmless wall lizard with a rolled-up magazine, dancing in and out in high excitement, as if the tiny thing were venomous. Fortunately, he was too scared of it to do much damage, and seemed grateful to escape with his life as the lizard whisked into a cranny, leaving behind a sad small severed tail.

Our Chinese colleagues, through no fault of their own, were mostly bureaucrats. No place was made for naturalists—far less for rare birds—during the rigors of the Great Leap Forward, in which hundreds of thousands of people died, and in consequence trained field biologists in China are elderly and few. Considering the nation's population pressures and its constrained economy, George Archibald pointed out, the Chinese deserve great credit for the efforts they are making to spare what little wildlife they have left.

No fear of the outdoors inhibited Ma Yiqing: he had brought binoculars and field clothes, and even a pair of brownish shorts for this warm weather. Ma was generally more fraternal than most of his compatriots, not only because he spoke some English but because he had worked with George Archibald for twelve years and understood the significance of international crane reserves, and was working hard to help his delegation arrive at some sort of agreement with the Russians. He was also noisy and amusing, a real extrovert, and, for all these reasons, one suspected, was looked at askance by some of his countrymen, who felt less free to voice opinions and were apt to wear closed faces when in foreign company.

TOWARD noon, the ship arrived at the nineteenth-century cossack village of Innokentievka, which has been farmed communally since the nineteen-thirties, when the farmers' grain was confiscated and famine induced to improve the people's attitude toward collective farming. Like most of the river settlements at this low-water time of year, it had a broad brown beach, which was used for bathing. Robust Siberians took the sun where in Stalin's day, we were told, villagers might come down in quest of fish and die of starvation at the river's edge.

A helicopter descended miraculously upon the beach to fly a group of us in relays over the Khinganski Reserve. There were no Chinese in our excursion party—whether because they weren't invited or because they didn't want to come nobody seemed to know. Most of the Americans uncomfortably suspected that we were receiving preferential treatment because American groups were underwriting the conference. As for the Japanese, all but their TV crew were English-speaking associates and longtime friends of Archibald, including Noritaka Ichida, the president of Japan's Wild Bird Society, and Dr. Hiroyuki Masatomi, who, back in 1971, shared in Archibald's discovery that the Hokkaido population of the red-crowned crane did not migrate to the mainland after all.

The Arkhara Plain lies inland from the village, a huge savanna of bog and wet meadow parted by small rivers and scattered with islands of willow, birch, and poplar. A roe deer, then another, flushed from the swale, went streaking in long bounds through the birch islands—slivers of warm red-brown in the white trees. Water birds fled in all directions as the helicopter, a chattering brown-and-orange Aeroflot machine, slid out sideways to investigate four or five treetop nests of the white storks, in which huge black-and-white young crouched flat in the battering wind.

Across the distance flew two white-naped cranes, long necks outstretched, and, farther on, the aircraft made life miserable for a pair of molting white-napeds flapping through the reeds, unable to fly. Of the red-crowned crane I had come so far to see there was no sign.

Both crane species at Khinganski are part of what ornithologists know as the Oriental avifauna, and they are at the north end of their range here on the Amur. The red-crowned arrives at Khinganski first and occupies the center of the breeding territories, farthest from the boundaries and from man, leaving the outer areas to the white-naped. Like its close relative the whooping crane, the red-crowned rarely leaves the sanctuary of its remote swamps, while the white-naped stays closer to the agricultural lands, where it does much of its feeding. In the absence of cropland in the vicinity of the nesting site, white-naped adults may abandon the chicks for several hours to go feed in the fields.

On a lake on the Arkhara Plain the reserve maintains a crane-breeding station, which obtains its eggs and chicks from nests threatened by fires that sweep over the reserve in spring almost every year. At present, there were three resident red-crowned cranes—one chick, one yearling, and one male adult—together with a solitary white-naped chick. The big-footed young, gold-brown in both species, resemble immense baby chickens, even to the confiding curiosity and sweet peeping. The red-crowned chick was being reared mostly by the yearling, in the absence of any parental impulse in the male—a cranky bird that liked to hiss and stalk nervous visitors, and at one point brought a Japanese TV person to attention with a smart peck between the shoulder blades. "I am attacked," said the confounded Japanese, scarcely daring to look around at *G. japonensis.*

I walked out to the end of a wooded

ridge along the lake, and had hardly begun to scan the marsh when a striking red-white-and-black head rose from the reeds perhaps two hundred yards away, withdrew mysteriously, and rose again, joined this time by another. Soon two birds stalked out into the open, their black tertials, folded and draped like plumes on the white tail, giving them a striking "black-tailed" look complementing the black on neck and head. In a moment, standing close together, they stretched white necks into the sun to bugle a duet in answer to a cry from the captive male at the research station, which they doubtless perceived as an intruder into their territory. (This "unison call," characteristic of all cranes, is genetically determined, Archibald says, and offers a strong clue to crane phylogeny.) For a minute they stood, bright heads held high against the far oaks, under a blue sky, then vanished once more into the wind-waved reeds.

Not until the first rush of exultation passed did it occur to me that this pair, wild though they appeared, were too close to the research station not to be associated with it. And, in fact, it turned out that they had been raised by hand from eggs removed from the path of a spring fire, and, having grown accustomed to the station, had not responded to wild cranes that might have led them south in migration. Though these two birds had raised chicks in the wild, they were only "semi-wild," dependent in winter on the help of man. And yet how beautiful was the sight of them—bugling red-crowned cranes in a sunlit marsh!—in those first instants when I saw them, unburdened by the knowledge that their wildness was forever lost.

METAMORPHOSEN

When she was very angry,
you remember, she had screamed at you in a fury:
You will die as a suicide or a homicide.

She was clutching her doctorate
in psychology at the time.

The two of you were together
in a dim hotel room, overlooking the champagne air
of a vast and sparkling city.

It was the hour after
the hour of love, the dour hour of solitude.

Then she almost picked up a knife
to slay you, then, you remember, she almost jumped out
a window before you caught her.

It's like an old house, in seemingly good order.
No cobwebs. Or dust. Just an old house.
And so you'll think it can't be as old as they say.
And yet one wrong step, and soon you'll go
plunging through the floor, or another hapless gesture
and a stairway is collapsing beneath you.

It's like a law: the right pressure at the wrong point.
That is how it is: our work of madness—
over tea, a melody, perhaps, on the radio,
a day in January or in June, a tree
full of leaves, or not, the mirror of reverie,
when the mind can strike down suddenly

all that is in seemingly good order.
And without respect to one's age, though often precisely
because of one's age, it succeeds so easily.

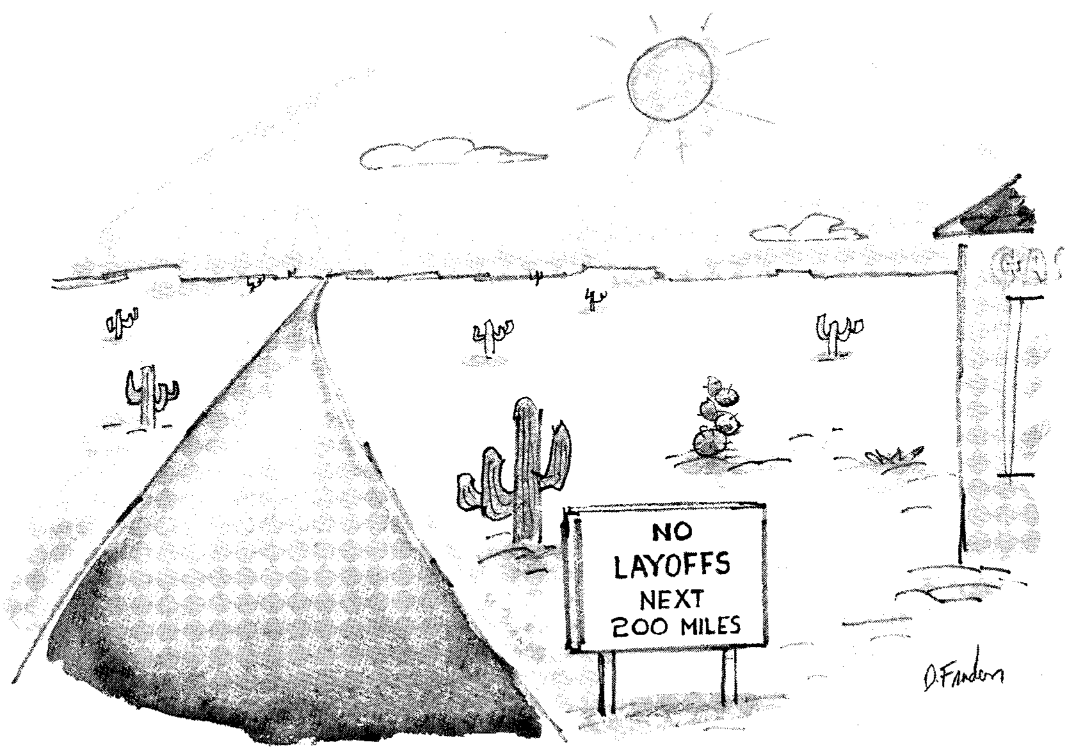
—ROBERT MAZZOCCO

WITH George Archibald, Jim Harris, and a few others, I tented for a night at the research station in order to join another helicopter expedition the next day, whose purpose was to capture and fit radio harnesses to those molting white-napeds.

Skidding his big machine around, the copter pilot managed to slow the two big birds, which were flapping and galloping over the wet prairie; then he dropped off Smirenski and Andronov to run them down. Even with more helicopter herding, the run turned out to be an extended effort that exhausted all parties to the chase, and eventually the male escaped entirely. The female was tackled by Smirenski, who was badly cut across the arms by the razor toenails of the big, floundering bird.

An adult crane of a large species is a very strong creature indeed, and the hard, sharp bill at the end of the long neck is a much more dangerous weapon than the claws, all the more so since the crane aims for the eyes. Several pairs of hands were needed to subdue and band this bird without harming it. One person held and taped the hard legs, and another grasped it by the neck as a Japanese ornithologist, Dr. Kiyoaki Ozaki, slipped a bag over its head—a move that usually calms the bird—and wrapped a cloth straitjacket around it, to pin its wings close to its sides and control its thrashing. The bird was then banded—a red band on the right leg, and a green band on the left, in case anyone wished to look for this bird next winter on the south island of Kyushu, in Japan, or possibly at Poyang Lake, in southeastern China. Then it was sexed and weighed and measured, and, finally, Ozaki fitted it with a small radio-telemeter in a back harness, which would permit satellite tracking during its migrations.

When the bag was removed, the



enormous bird, its fierce orange-gold eye blinking at electronic speed in the bare carmine skin, hissed in threat, like its reptile ancestors, and also, no doubt, in instinctual distress that in this frayed, smothered condition it could not properly defend itself, as it might have in its magnificent full plumage, of royal red, ivory white, and silver gray.

In the summer silence, on the sunlit Siberian savanna and wet meadow of iris and lilies, I was struck abruptly by the spectacle of so much manpower and big machinery—the noise and time and cost—devoted to the capture and plastic outfitting of this one dilapidated bird. After this most traumatic episode, and as a result of the perils and obstacles it would meet in the thousands of miles of its migrations (not excluding those that could be caused by the encumbrance of a backpack and satellite transmitter), this bird might never be observed again.

Jim Harris acknowledged that the radio-transmitter operation might cause the bird to run some risk during its migration. However, he thought that the risk was worth it, for the benefit of the species as a whole. There is much about the white-naped crane, *Grus vipio*, that is still unknown, including the location of some northern breeding grounds and certain routes on its migration flyways. The satellite tracking helps delineate where the birds go when they cross remote frontiers, and this provides a better understanding of which staging areas should be monitored to protect the migrants.

I had to agree, but with misgivings, and hoped we would learn next fall that this bird had made it.

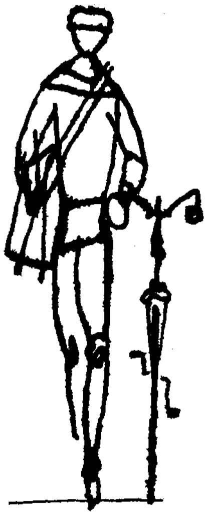
A GROWING sense that I was doomed to miss the wild red-crowned crane was sharply intensified at dawn the next day at the village of Poyarkovo (named, like our ship, for the cossack who led the first exploration down the Amur), where I awoke at six to find the ship docking at a coal depot, with long-necked cranes of the wrong sort elevated all around in the morning mist. Amur falcons, coursing the river like huge swallows in pursuit of insects, were small consolation for the news that the river was too low for the ship to proceed. The captain had counted on monsoon rains, but they were weeks late; now we could not reach our scheduled destination—the old frontier town of Blagoveshchensk, at the confluence of the Amur and Zeya Rivers.

On July 10, 1992, the villagers of Muravyovka, about fifty miles upriver, voted to lease to the Socio-Ecological Union an entirely protected thirteen-thousand-five-hundred-acre "nature park" mostly within a partly protected game refuge, for a crane sanctuary; the Wild Bird Society of Japan would donate the payment for this inviolable sanctuary. A historic signing took place in a town-hall ceremony attended by a throng of seventy: it marked the first time since the 1917 revolution that a private organization had acquired Russian land for a nature reserve. This excellent news, brought back by Smirenski, was accompanied by word that twelve cranes had been spotted from a river bluff overlooking the Khinganski Reserve. Although they were seen only from a distance, it was readily perceived that half of them were adult red-crowned cranes.

On the way downriver, the Chinese delegates signed a fervent but nonbinding resolution to work for the preservation of the Amur, and afterward they relaxed somewhat at parties held in the evenings in the dining salon. The monsoon was on the way at last: the Black Dragon skies were low, with rumors of the sullen rain that greeted us on the day of our return to Khabarovsk. George Archibald, Jim Harris, and I, with the Russian wildlife artist Viktor Bakhtin and Ma Yiqing and some other Chinese delegates from Heilongjiang, then took the night train south to Spassk, a prosperous town on the Ussuri Plain, east of Lake Khanka, where the I.C.F. hoped to preside over the birth of an international crane reserve, a symbol and a main purpose of our journeys.

Like all Siberian cities, Spassk is drab, in sad need of a patch and a coat of paint, but it is also clean and prosperous, thanks to a cement factory and the rich agriculture of the old lake floor. As in Khabarovsk, the statue of Lenin still stands in the town square, a monument not to ideology but to indifference; Spassk is several thousand miles from Moscow, after all. As in most Siberian towns, the streets are lined with dark-and-dull-leaved poplars, and the houses are mostly a dark leaden green or a soiled blue, with large, rampant vegetable gardens out behind. The citizens line up for paychecks, for bread, and even for beer, which was dispensed from a tank cart at the market in this hot midsummer weather. The most picturesque spot I saw in Spassk was an old cemetery, overgrown with mournful trees and long, sad grasses that whispered above the artificial flowers and gaunt monuments. "Our friends are here, and our co-workers, and our parents, too," one young woman told me. "So our cemetery is called the Second Town."

The Vladivostok crane biologist Dr. Yuri Shibaev, Jim Harris, and I accompanied Chen Jing Lu, the chairman of the Mishan County Forest Bureau in Heilongjiang, and his deputy, Yu Chang Shen, who serves as director of the Xingkai Hu Reserve, on a helicopter survey of the border region on the eastern shore of Xingkai Hu, or Lake Khanka, where the international reserve might be established. The Chinese led the way in 1986, with the establishment, on the lake's western side, of the Xingkai Hu Reserve, which they have since expanded; the Lake Khanka reserve, on the Russian side—wetlands and open water, with a buffer zone of drier marsh and a prohibition against fishing or hunting within a mile of the shoreline—was created four years later. The international reserve would encompass these two and add a lot more land in the vicinity. Since this is the richest agricultural land in all Siberia, the proposal that the wetlands near the lake be made into a crane reserve has been fought hard by the farmers. Similarly, on the Chinese side, the Xingkai Hu Reserve lies near the eastern part of the Three Rivers Plain, which is not only important agriculturally but is one of the last lowland areas of China which is not yet aswarm with human beings.



The Khanka marshlands represented my last chance on this journey to observe *G. japonensis* in the wild. The aircraft flew over the grain fields west of Spassk, then north across the paddy fields and marshes of the buffer zone between the town and the lake. Xingkai Hu–Lake Khanka, shining silver in the mist, is a shallow basin some fifty miles across; next to Baikal, it is the largest lake east of the Urals, but its average depth is about twelve feet, whereas Baikal, in places, descends more than a mile. This whole flat plain of the upper Ussuri was formerly lake bottom, and in the Pleistocene epoch, when that ancient lake went dry, the northern taiga penetrated this far south; it was cut back by Russian settlers in the last century. Today, the lake is severely polluted by heavy metals from the coal-mining industry, and by herbicides and pesticides from the rice fields.

Spassk was still in sight when, to the northeast of our route, I saw three long white birds in slow, measured flight on a course that would soon intersect our own. I leaned forward and yelled "Red-crowneds!" to Jim Harris, and he waved at me blithely over his shoulder.

The cranes were swinging off toward the north, not in panic, yet increasing speed with a hard wingbeat. Through binoculars I saw that all were adults, with fine white-pennanted black-and-red heads and the striking black pattern on their strong white wings. The birds turned in to the sun, then disappeared.

I sat back in a suffusion of well-being as the helicopter clattered on over the marshes. The wind of its rotors bent fresh reeds and riffled sparkling black sloughs all set about with tall white birds—egrets, swans, and storks—that could not compare in size or majesty with those great cranes.

Perhaps fifty miles north of Spassk, the aircraft approached the frontier, at a small river that divides the two reserves, flowing eastward through wet meadowlands from the misty lake to the Ussuri. Here the helicopter turned back south, following a wooded ridge. Just east of the ridge, stalking the open savanna between ponds, was a red-crowned crane family of four, the adults moving swiftly, without fluttering or flight, to draw two big brown chicks from pale-green meadow into deep-green reeds. The helicopter turned back for a better look, swinging out wide so as not to flare the cranes. In such a setting, the huge birds with their huge chicks evoked those ancestral cranes that walked among the large swamp reptiles in the morning sunlight of the Eocene, fifty million years ago.

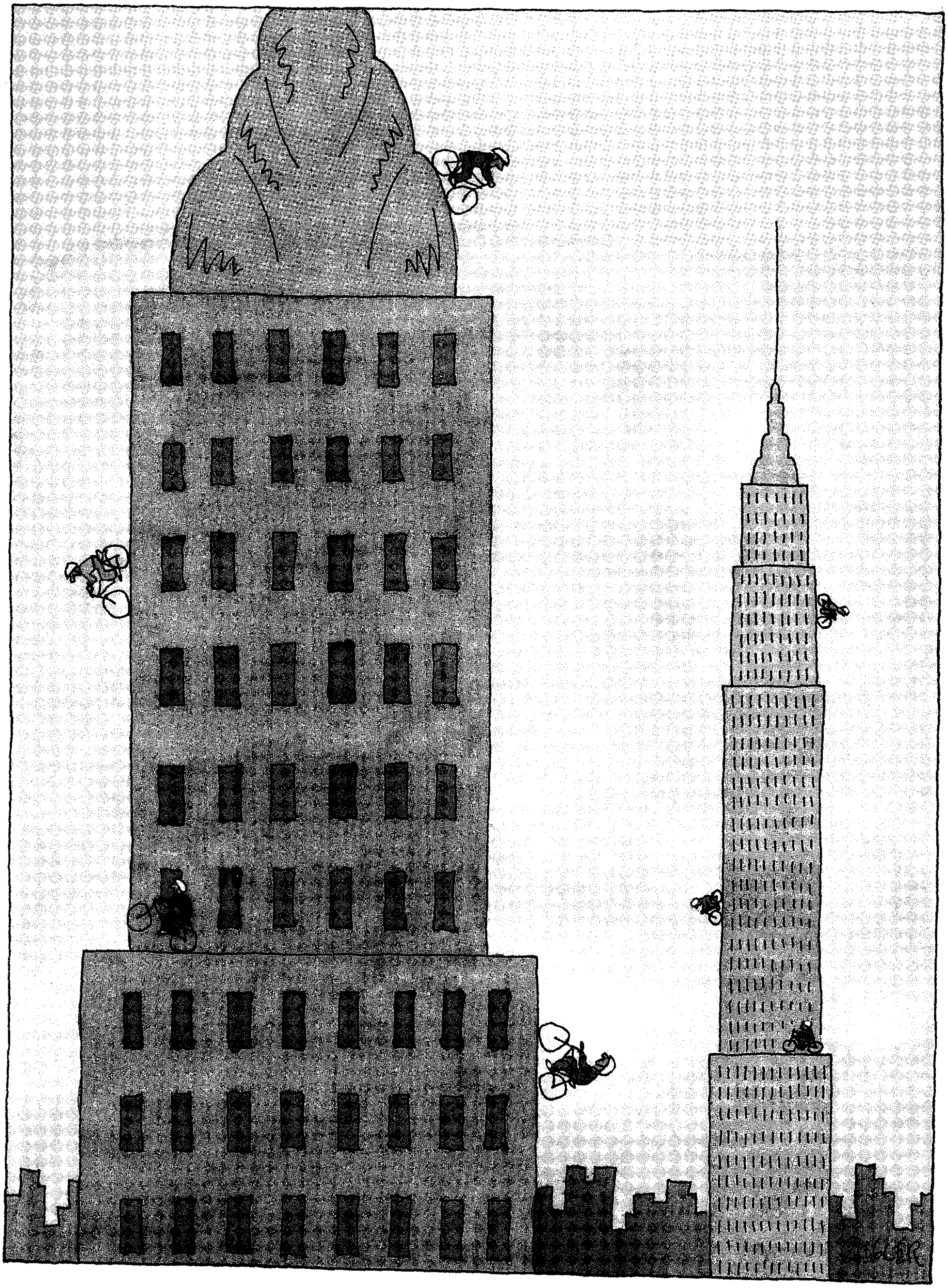
On the evening of July 15th, a farewell party at the Hotel Lotos became an occasion of true, boisterous festivity. Thanks to the patient mediation of the I.C.F., the Chinese and the Russian researchers and conservationists had met for two weeks face to face, and now they were toasting one another and vowing to meet again. Harris commented, "The Chinese and Russians and Japanese *must* work together. If we give up on that, we give up on the Amur and much else besides." In an agreement signed at Spassk the following morning, the Russians undertook to provide a helicopter for a crane survey of Xingkai Hu next year, with the Chinese providing logistical support and biologists from both sides participating. Unlike the rhetorical Amur Declaration, this was a firm practical agreement, and everyone present recognized it as the critical first step in establishing an international reserve for endangered species.

Noritaka Ichida, of Japan's Wild Bird Society, had flown off to the Kuriles with the *zapovednik* director Mikhail Dykhan to establish international coöperation concerning its cranes. In the next few days, Jim Harris and I were to travel to Mongolia to verify reports of breeding white-naped cranes in the Kerulen River—headwaters of the Amur—and in marshes just across the border from the Russian reserve known as Daurski. In celebrating the Lake Khanka accord, we indulged ourselves in excited talk of the proposed three-nation reserve in the river marshes of the Central Asian steppes. Nebulous and fragile though it was, a skeleton of harmony had been created.

In February of this year, I heard separately from Archibald and Harris that the Chinese and the Russians were already hard at work on a coöperative crane program at Xingkai Hu–Lake Khanka for this spring. Harris also reported the good news that the white-naped crane whose backpack of radio-telemetry equipment had troubled me that day at Khinganski had turned up safely at Xingkai Hu–Lake Khanka in the early autumn, flown on to another staging area, in Korea's demilitarized zone, and arrived, finally, on its winter grounds at Kyushu, in southern Japan. By now, the fierce-eyed bird will have left Kyushu, on its way back north to the Amur Basin, transmitting useful information all the way. ♦

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY JACK ZIEGLER

'SCRAPER BIKING, MANHATTAN, SPRING, '93



FICTION

IN THE GLOAMING

BY ALICE ELLIOTT DARK

Her son wanted to talk again, suddenly. During the days, he still brooded, scowling at the swimming pool from the vantage point of his wheelchair, where he sat covered with blankets despite the summer heat. In the evenings, though, Laird became more like his old self—his *old* old self, really. He became sweeter, the way he'd been as a child, before he began to cloak himself with layers of irony and clever remarks. He spoke with an openness that astonished her. No one she knew talked that way—no man, at least. After he was asleep, Janet would run through the conversations in her mind, and realize what it was she wished she had said. She knew she was generally considered sincere, but that had more to do with her being a good listener than with how she expressed herself. She found it hard work to keep up with him, but it was the work she had pined for all her life.

A month earlier, after a particularly long and gruelling visit with a friend who'd come up on the train from New York, Laird had declared a new policy: no visitors, no telephone calls. She didn't blame him. People who hadn't seen him for a while were often shocked to tears by his appearance, and, rather than having them cheer him up, he felt obliged to comfort them. She'd overheard bits of some of those conversations. The final one was no worse than the others, but he was fed up. He had said more than once that he wasn't cut out to be the brave one, the one who would inspire everybody to walk away from a visit with him feeling uplifted, shaking their heads in wonder. He had liked being the most handsome and missed it very much; he was not a good victim. When he had had enough he went into a self-imposed retreat, complete with a wall of silence and other ascetic practices that kept him busy for several weeks.

Then he softened. Not only did he want to talk again; he wanted to talk to *her*.

It began the night they ate outside on the terrace for the first time all summer. Afterward, Martin—Laird's father—got up to make a telephone call, but Janet stayed in her wicker chair, resting before clearing the table. It was one of those moments when she felt nostalgic for cigarettes. On nights like this, when the air was completely still, she used to blow her famous smoke rings for the children, dutifully obeying their commands to blow one through another or three in a row, or to make big, ropy circles that expanded as they floated up to the heavens. She did exactly what they wanted, for as long as they wanted, sometimes going through a quarter of a pack before they allowed her to stop. Incredibly, neither Anne nor Laird became smokers. Just the opposite; they nagged at her to quit, and were pleased when she finally did. She wished they had been just a little bit sorry; it was a part of their childhood coming to an end, after all.

Out of habit, she took note of the first lightning bug, the first star. The lawn darkened, and the flowers that had sulked in the heat all day suddenly released their perfumes. She laid her head back on the rim of the chair and closed her eyes. Soon she was following Laird's breathing, and found herself picking up the vital rhythms, breathing along. It was so peaceful, being near him like this. How many mothers spend so much time with their thirty-three-year-old sons? she thought. She had as much of him now as she had had when he was an infant; more, in a way, because she had the memory of the intervening years as well, to round out her thoughts about him. When they sat quietly together she felt as close to him as she ever had. It was still him in there, inside the failing shell. *She still enjoyed him.*

"The gloaming," he said, suddenly.

She nodded dreamily, automatically, then sat up. She turned to him. "What?" Although she had heard.

"I remember when I was little you took me over to the picture window and told me that in Scotland this time of day was called the 'gloaming.' "

Her skin tingled. She cleared her throat, quietly, taking care not to make too much of an event of his talking again. "You thought I said 'gloomy.' "

He gave a smile, then looked at her searchingly. "I always thought it hurt you somehow that the day was over, but you said it was a beautiful time because for a few moments the purple light made the whole world look like the Scottish Highlands on a summer night."

"Yes. As if all the earth were covered with heather."

"I'm sorry I never saw Scotland," he said.

"You're a Scottish lad nonetheless," she said. "At least on my side." She remembered offering to take him to Scotland once, but Laird hadn't been interested. By then, he was in college and already sure of his own destinations, which had diverged so thoroughly from hers. "I'm amazed you remember that conversation. You couldn't have been more than seven."

"I've been remembering a lot, lately."

"Have you?"

"Mostly about when I was very small. I suppose it comes from having you take care of me again. Sometimes, when I wake up and see your face, I feel I can remember you looking in on me when I was in my crib. I remember your dresses."

"Oh, no!" She laughed lightly.

"You always had the loveliest expression," he said.

She was astonished, caught off guard. Then, she had a memory, too—of her leaning over Laird's crib and suddenly having a picture of looking up at her own mother. "I know what you mean," she said.

"You do, don't you?"

He looked at her in a close, intimate way that made her self-conscious. She caught herself swinging her leg nervously, like a pendulum, and stopped.

"Mom," he said. "There are still a few things I need to do. I have to write a will, for one thing."

Her heart went flat. In his presence she had always maintained that he would get well. She wasn't sure she could discuss the other possibility.

"Thank you," he said.

"For what?"

"For not saying that there's plenty of

time for that, or some similar sentiment."

"The only reason I didn't say it was to avoid the cliché, not because I don't believe it."

"You believe there is plenty of time?"

She hesitated; he noticed, and leaned forward slightly. "I believe there is time," she said.

"Even if I were healthy, it would be a good idea."

"I suppose."

"I don't want to leave it until it's too late. You wouldn't want me to suddenly leave everything to the nurses, would you?"

She laughed, pleased to hear him joking again. "All right, all right, I'll call the lawyer."

"That would be great." There was a pause. "Is this still your favorite time of day, Mom?"

"Yes, I suppose it is," she said, "although I don't think in terms of favorites anymore."

"Never mind favorites, then. What else do you like?"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean exactly that."

"I don't know. I care about all the ordinary things. You know what I like."

"Name one thing."

"I feel silly."

"Please?"

"All right. I like my patch of lilies of the valley under the trees over there. Now can we change the subject?"

"Name one more thing."

"Why?"

"I want to get to know you."

"Oh, Laird, there's nothing to know."

"I don't believe that for a minute."

"But it's true. I'm average. The only extraordinary thing about me is my children."

"All right," he said. "Then let's talk about how you feel about me."

"Do you flirt with your nurses like this when I'm not around?"

"I don't dare. They've got me where they want me." He looked at her. "You're changing the subject."

She smoothed her skirt. "I know how you feel about church, but if you need to talk I'm sure the minister would be glad to come over. Or if you would rather have a doctor . . . "

He laughed.

"What?"

"That you still call psychiatrists 'doctors.' "

She shrugged.

"I don't need a professional, Ma." He laced his hands and pulled at them as he struggled for words.

"What can I do?" she asked.

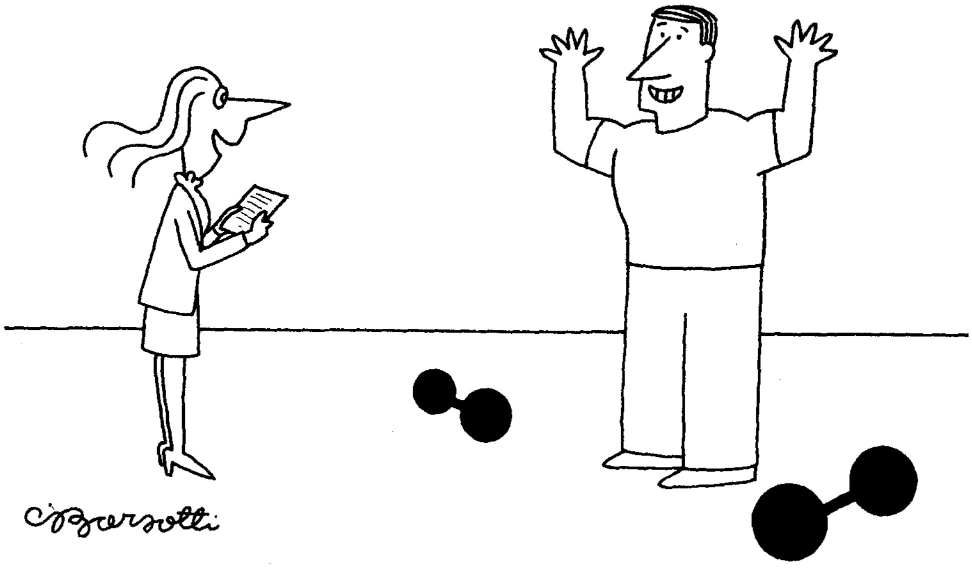
He met her gaze. "You're where I come from. I need to know about you."

That night she lay awake, trying to think of how she could help, of what, aside from her time, she had to offer. She couldn't imagine.

SHE was anxious the next day when he was sullen again, but the next night, and on each succeeding night, the dusk worked its spell. She set dinner on the table outside, and afterward, when Martin had vanished into the maw of his study, she and Laird began to speak. The air around them seemed to crackle with the energy they were creating in their effort to know and be known. Were other people so close, she wondered. She never had been, not to anybody. Certainly she and Martin had never really connected, not soul to soul, and with her friends, no matter how loyal and reliable, she always had a sense of what she could do that would alienate them. Of course, her friends had the option of cutting her off, and Martin could always ask for a divorce, whereas Laird was a captive audience. Parents and children were all captive audiences to each other; in view of this, it was amazing how little comprehension there was of one another's stories. Everyone stopped paying attention so early on, thinking they had figured it all out. She recognized that she was as guilty of this as anyone. She was still surprised whenever she went over to her daughter's house and saw how neat she was; in her mind, Anne was still a sloppy teen-ager who threw sweaters into the corner of her closet and candy wrappers under her bed. It still surprised her that Laird wasn't interested in girls. He had been, hadn't he? She remembered lying awake listening for him to come home, hoping that he was smart enough to apply what he knew about the facts of life, to take precautions.

Now she had the chance to let go of these old notions. It wasn't that she liked everything about Laird—there was much that remained foreign to her—but she wanted to know about all of it. As she came to her senses every morning in the moment or two after she awoke, she found herself aching with love and gratitude, as if he were a small, perfect creature again and she could look forward to a day of watching him grow. Quickly, she became greedy for their evenings. She replaced her half-facetious, half-hopeful reading of the horoscope in the daily newspaper with a new habit of tracking the time the sun would set, and drew satisfaction from seeing it come earlier as the summer waned; it meant she didn't have to wait as long. She took to sleeping late, shortening the day even more. It was ridiculous, she knew. She was behaving like a girl with a crush, behaving absurdly. It was a feeling she had thought she'd never have again, and now here it was. She immersed herself in it, living her life for the twilight moment when his eyes would begin to glow, the signal that he was stirring into consciousness. Then her real day would begin.

"Dad ran off quickly," he said one



"It's from MOMA. You've been accepted for the permanent collection."

night. She had been wondering when he would mention it.

“He had a phone call to make,” she said automatically.

Laird looked directly into her eyes, his expression one of gentle reproach. He was letting her know he had caught her in the central lie of her life, which was that she understood Martin’s obsession with his work. She averted her gaze. The truth was that she had never understood. Why couldn’t he sit with her for half an hour after dinner, or, if not with her, why not with his dying son?

She turned sharply to look at Laird. The word “dying” had sounded so loudly in her mind that she wondered if she had spoken it, but he showed no reaction. She wished she hadn’t even thought it. She tried to stick to good thoughts in his presence. When she couldn’t, and he had a bad night afterward, she blamed herself, as her efficient memory dredged up all the books and magazine articles she had read emphasizing the effect of psychological factors on the course of the disease. She didn’t entirely believe it, but she felt compelled to give the benefit of the doubt to every theory that might help. It couldn’t do any harm to think positively. And if it gave him a few more months . . .

“I don’t think Dad can stand to be around me.”

“That’s not true.” It was true.

“Poor Dad. He’s always been a hypochondriac—we have that in common. He must hate this.”

“He just wants you to get well.”

“If that’s what he wants, I’m afraid I’m going to disappoint him again. At least this will be the last time I let him down.”

He said this merrily, with the old, familiar light darting from his eyes. She allowed herself to be amused. He had always been fond of teasing, and held no subject sacred. As the de-facto authority figure in the house—Martin hadn’t been home enough to be the real disciplinarian—she had often been forced to reprimand Laird, but, in truth, she shared his sense of humor. She responded to it now by leaning over to cuff him on the arm. It was an automatic response, prompted by a burst of high spirits that took no notice of the circumstances. It was a mistake. Even through the thickness of his terry-cloth robe, her knuckles knocked on bone. There was nothing left of him.

“It’s his loss,” she said, the shock of Laird’s thinness making her serious again. It was the furthest she would go in criticizing Martin. She had always felt it her duty to maintain a benign image of him for the children. He had become a character of her invention, with a whole range of postulated emotions whereby he missed them when he was away on a business trip and thought of them every few minutes when he had to work late. Some years earlier, when she was secretly seeing a doctor—a psychiatrist—she had finally admitted to herself that Martin was never going to be the lover she had dreamed of. He was an ambitious, competitive, self-absorbed man who probably should never have got married. It was such a relief to be able to face it that she had wanted to share the news with her children, only to discover that they were dependent on the myth. They could hate his work, but they could not bring themselves to believe he had any choice in the matter. She had dropped the subject.

“Thank you, Ma. It’s his loss in your case, too.”

A throbbing began behind her eyes, angering her. The last thing she wanted to do was cry. There would be plenty of time for that. “It’s not all his fault,” she said when she had regained some measure of control. “I’m not very good at talking about myself. I was brought up not to.”

“So was I,” he said.

“Yes, I suppose you were.”

“Luckily, I didn’t pay any attention.” He grinned.

“I hope not,” she said, and meant it. “Can I get you anything?”

“A new immune system?”

She rolled her eyes, trying to disguise the way his joke had touched on her prayers. “Very funny. I was thinking more along the lines of an iced tea or an extra blanket.”

“I’m fine. I’m getting tired, actually.”

Her entire body went on the alert, and she searched his face anxiously for signs of deterioration. Her nerves darted and pricked whenever he wanted anything; her adrenaline rushed. The fight-or-flight response, she supposed. She had often wanted to flee, but had forced herself to stay, to fight with what few weapons she had. She responded to his needs, making sure there was a fresh, clean set of sheets ready when he was tired, food when he was hungry. It was what she could do.

“Shall I get the nurse?” She pushed her chair back from the table.

“O.K.,” Laird said weakly. He stretched out his hand to her, and the incipient moonlight illuminated his skin, so it shone like alabaster. His face had turned ashy. It was a sight that made her stomach drop. She ran for Maggie, and by the time they returned Laird’s eyes were closed, his head lolling to one side. Automatically, Janet looked for a stirring in his chest. There it was: his shoulders expanded; he still breathed. Always, in the second before she saw movement, she became cold and clinical as she braced herself for the possibility of discovering that he was dead.

Maggie had her fingers on his wrist and was counting his pulse against the second hand on her watch, her lips moving. She laid his limp hand back on his lap. “Fast,” she pronounced.

“I’m not surprised,” Janet said, masking her fear with authority. “We had a long talk.”

Maggie frowned. “Now I’ll have to wake him up again for his meds.”

“Yes, I suppose that’s true. I forgot about that.”

Janet wheeled him into his makeshift room downstairs and helped Maggie lift him into the rented hospital bed. Although he weighed almost nothing, it was really a job for two; his weight was dead weight. In front of Maggie, she was all brusque efficiency, except for the moment when her fingers strayed to touch Laird’s pale cheek and she prayed she hadn’t done any harm.

“Who’s your favorite author?” he asked one night.

“Oh, there are so many,” she said.

“Your real favorite.”

She thought. “The truth is there are certain subjects I find attractive more than certain authors. I seem to read in cycles, to fulfill an emotional yearning.”

“Such as?”

“Books about people who go off to live in Africa or Australia or the South Seas.”

He laughed. “That’s fairly self-explanatory. What else?”

"When I really hate life I enjoy books about real murders. 'True crime,' I think they're called now. They're very punishing."

"Is that what's so compelling about them? I could never figure it out. I just know that at certain times I loved the gore, even though I felt absolutely disgusted with myself for being interested in it."

"You need to think about when those times were. That will tell you a lot." She paused. "I don't like reading about sex."

"Big surprise!"

"No, no," she said. "It's not for the reason you think, or not only for that reason. You see me as a prude, I know, but remember, it's part of a mother's job to come across that way. Although perhaps I went a bit far . . ."

He shrugged amiably. "Water under the bridge. But go on about sex."

"I think it should be private. I always feel as though these writers are showing off when they describe a sex scene. They're not really trying to describe sex, but to demonstrate that they're not afraid to write about it. As if they're thumbing their noses at their mothers."

He made a moue.

Janet went on. "You don't think there's an element of that? I *do* question their motives, because I don't think sex can ever actually be portrayed—the sensations and the emotions are . . . beyond language. If you only describe the mechanics, the effect is either clinical or pornographic, and if you try to describe intimacy instead, you wind up with abstractions. The only sex you could describe fairly well is bad sex—and who wants to read about that, for God's sake, when everyone is having bad sex of their own?"

"Mother!" He was laughing helplessly, his arms hanging limply over the sides of his chair.

"I mean it. To me it's like reading about someone using the bathroom."

"Good grief!"

"Now who's the prude?"

"I never said I wasn't," he said. "Maybe we should change the subject."

She looked out across the land. The lights were on in other people's houses, giving the evening the look of early fall. The leaves were different, too, becoming droopy. The grass was dry, even with all the watering and tending from the gardener. The summer was nearly over.

"Maybe we shouldn't," she said. "I've been wondering. Was that side of life satisfying for you?"

"Ma, tell me you're not asking me about my sex life."

She took her napkin and folded it carefully, lining up the edges and running her fingers along the hems. She felt very calm, very pulled together and all of a piece, as if she'd finally got the knack of being a dignified woman. She threaded her fingers and laid her hands in her lap. "I'm asking about your love life," she said. "Did you love, and were you loved in return?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad."

"That was easy," he said.

"Oh, I've gotten very easy, in my old age."

"Does Dad know about this?" His eyes were twinkling wickedly.

"Don't be fresh," she said.

"You started it."

"Then I'm stopping it. Now."

He made a funny face, and then another, until she could no longer keep from smiling. His routine carried her back to memories of his childhood efforts to charm her: watercolors of her favorite vistas (unrecognizable without the captions), bouquets of violets self-consciously flung into her lap, chores performed without prompting. He had always gone too far, then backtracked to regain even footing. She had always allowed herself to be wooed.

Suddenly she realized: Laird had been the love of her life.

ONE night it rained hard. Janet decided to serve the meal in the kitchen, since Martin was out. They ate in silence; she was freed from the compulsion to keep up the steady stream of chatter that she used to affect when Laird hadn't talked at all; now she knew she could save her words for afterward. He ate nothing but comfort foods lately: mashed potatoes, vanilla ice cream, rice pudding. The days of his strict macrobiotic regime, and all the cooking classes she had taken in order to help him along with it, were past. His body was essentially a thing of the past, too; when he ate, he was feeding what was left of his mind. He seemed to want to recapture the cosseted feeling he'd had when he'd been sick as a child and she would serve him flat ginger ale, and toast soaked in cream, and play endless card games with him, using his blanket-covered legs as a table. In those days, too, there'd been a general sense of giving way to ill-

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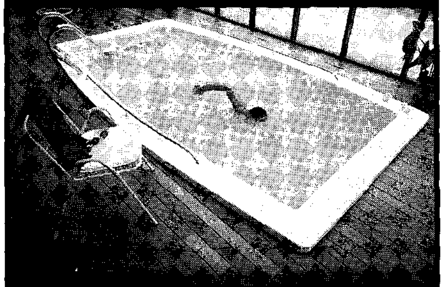

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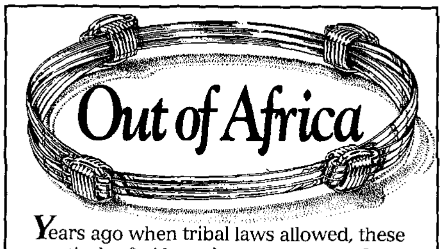

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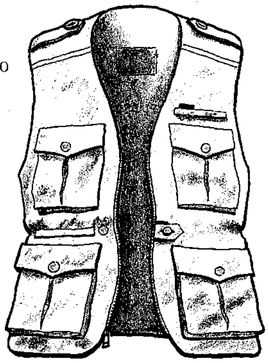

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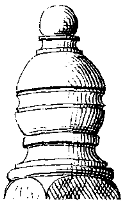

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ness: then, he let himself go completely because he knew he would soon be better and active and have a million things expected of him again. Now he let himself go because he had fought long enough.

Finally, he pushed his bowl toward the middle of the table, signalling that he was finished. (His table manners had gone to pieces. Who cared?) She felt a light, jittery excitement, the same jazzy feeling she got when she was in a plane that was just picking up speed on the runway. She arranged her fork and knife on the rim of her plate and pulled her chair in closer. "I had an odd dream last night," she said.

His eyes remained dull.

She waited uncertainly, thinking that perhaps she had started to talk too soon. "Would you like something else to eat?"

He shook his head. There was no will in his expression; his refusal was purely physical, a gesture coming from the satiation in his stomach. An animal walking away from its bowl, she thought.

To pass the time, she carried the dishes to the sink, gave them a good hot rinse, and put them in the dishwasher. She carried the ice cream to the counter, pulled a spoon from the drawer and scraped off a mouthful of the thick, creamy residue that stuck to the inside of the lid. She ate it without thinking, so the sudden sweetness caught her by surprise. All the while she kept track of Laird, but every time she thought she noticed signs of his readiness to talk and hurried back to the table she found his face still blank.

She went to the window. The lawn had become a floodplain and was filled with broad pools; the branches of the evergreens sagged, and the sky was the same uniform grayish yellow it had been since morning. She saw him focus his gaze on the line where the treetops touched the heavens, and she understood. There was no lovely interlude on this rainy night, no heathered dusk. The gray landscape had taken the light out of him.

"I'm sorry," she said aloud, as if it were her fault.

He gave a tiny, helpless shrug.

She hovered for a few moments, hoping, but his face was slack, and she gave up. She felt utterly forsaken, too disappointed and agitated to sit with him and watch the rain. "It's all right," she said. "It's a good night to watch television."

She wheeled him to the den and left him with Maggie, then did not know what to do with herself. She had no contingency plan for this time. It was usually the one period of the day when she did not need the anesthesia of tennis games, bridge lessons, volunteer work, errands. She had not considered the present possibility. For some time, she hadn't given any thought to what Martin would call "the big picture." Her conversations with Laird had lulled her into inventing a parallel big picture of her own. She realized that a part of her had worked out a whole scenario: the summer evenings would blend into fall; then, gradually, the winter would arrive, heralding chats by the fire, Laird resting his feet on the pigskin ottoman in the den while she dutifully knitted her yearly Christmas sweaters for Anne's children.

She had allowed herself to imagine a future. That had been her mistake. This silent, endless evening was her punishment, a reminder of how things really were.

She did not know where to go in her own house, and ended up wandering through the rooms, propelled by a vague, hunted feeling. Several times, she turned around, expecting someone to be there, but, of course, no one ever was. She was quite alone. Eventually, she realized that she was imagining a person in order to give material properties to the source of her wounds. She was inventing a villain. There should be a villain, shouldn't there? There should be an enemy, a devil, an evil force that could be driven out. Her imagination had provided it with aspects of a corporeal presence so she could pretend, for a moment, that there was a real enemy hovering around her, someone she could have the police come and take away. But the enemy was part of Laird, and neither he nor she nor any of the doctors or experts or ministers could separate the two.

She went upstairs and took a shower. She barely paid attention to her own body anymore, and only noticed abstractly that the water was too hot, her skin turning pink. Afterward, she sat on the chaise longue in her bedroom and tried to read. She heard something; she leaned forward and cocked her head toward the sound. Was that Laird's voice? Suddenly she believed that he had begun to talk after all—she believed he was talking to Maggie. She dressed and went downstairs. He was alone in the den, alone with the television. He didn't hear or see her. She watched him take a drink from a cup, his hand shaking badly. It was a plastic cup with a straw poking through the lid, the kind used by small children while they are learning to drink. It was supposed to prevent accidents, but it couldn't stop his hands from trembling. He managed to spill the juice anyway.

LAIRD had always coveted the decadent pile of cashmere lap blankets she had collected over the years in the duty-free shops of the various British airports. Now he wore one around his shoulders, one over his knees. She remembered similar balmy nights when he would arrive home from soccer practice after dark, a towel slung around his neck.

"I suppose it has to be in the church," he said.

"I think it should," she said, "but it's up to you."

"I guess it's not the most timely moment to make a statement about my personal disbeliefs. But I'd like you to keep it from being too lugubrious. No lilies, for instance."

"God forbid."

"And have some decent music."

"Such as?"

"I had an idea, but now I can't remember."

He pressed his hands to his eyes. His fingers were so transparent that they looked as if he were holding them over a flashlight.

"Please buy a smashing dress, something mournful yet elegant."

"All right."

"And don't wait until the last minute."

She didn't reply.

JANET gave up on the idea of a rapprochement between Martin and Laird; she felt freer when she stopped hoping for it. Martin rarely came home for dinner anymore. Perhaps he was having an affair? It was a thought she'd never allowed herself to have before, but it didn't threaten her now. Good for him, she even decided, in her strongest, most magnanimous moments. Good for him if he's actually feeling bad and trying to do something to make himself feel better.

Anne was brave and chipper during her visits, yet when she walked back out to her car, she would wrap her arms around her ribs and shudder. "I don't know how you do it, Mom. Are you really all right?" she always asked, with genuine concern. "Anne's become such a hopeless matron," Laird always said, with fond exasperation, when he and his mother were alone again later. Once, Janet began to tease him for finally coming to friendly terms with his sister, but she cut it short when she saw that he was blinking furiously.

They were exactly the children she had hoped to have: a companionable girl, a mischievous boy. It gave her great pleasure to see them together. She did not try to listen to their conversations but watched from a distance, usually from the kitchen as she prepared them a snack reminiscent of their childhood, like watermelon boats or lemonade. Then she would walk Anne to the car, their similar good shoes clacking across the gravel. They hugged, pressing each other's arms, and their brief embraces buoyed them up—forbearance and grace passing back and forth between them like a piece of shared clothing, designated for use by whoever needed it most. It was the kind of parting toward which she had aimed her whole life, a graceful, secure parting at the close of a peaceful afternoon. After Anne left, Janet always had a tranquil moment or two as she walked back to the house through the humid September air. Everything was so still. Occasionally there were the hums and clicks of a lawnmower or the shrieks of a band of children heading home from school. There were the insects and the birds. It was a straightforward, simple life she had chosen. She had tried never to ask for too much, and to be of use. Simplicity had been her hedge against bad luck. It had worked for so long. For a brief moment, as she stepped lightly up the single slate stair and through the door, her legs still harboring all their former vitality, she could pretend her luck was still holding.

Then she would glance out the window and there would be the heart-catching sight of Laird, who would never again drop by for a casual visit. Her chest would ache and flutter, a cave full of bats.

Perhaps she had asked for too much, after all.

"WHAT did you want to be when you grew up?" Laird asked.

"I was expected to be a wife and mother. I accepted that. I wasn't a rebel."

"There must have been something else."

"No," she said. "Oh, I guess I had all the usual fantasies of the day, of being the

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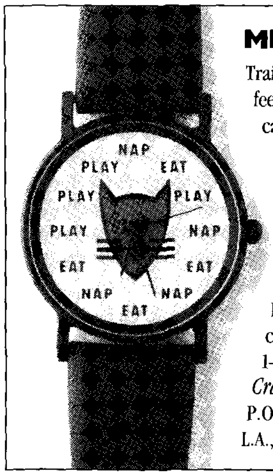

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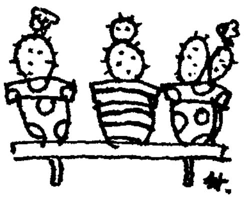
next Amelia Earhart or Margaret Mead, but that was all they were—fantasies. I wasn't even close to being brave enough. Can you imagine me flying across the ocean on my own?" She laughed and looked over for his laughter, but he had fallen asleep.

A FRIEND of Laird's had somehow got the mistaken information that Laird had died, so she and Martin received a condolence letter. There was a story about a time a few years back when the friend was with Laird on a bus in New York. They had been sitting behind two older women, waitresses who began to discuss their income taxes, trying to decide how much of their tip income to declare to sound realistic so they wouldn't attract an audit. Each woman offered up bits of folk wisdom on the subject, describing in detail her particular situation. During a lull in the conversation, Laird stood up.



"Excuse me, I couldn't help overhearing," he said, leaning over them. "May I have your names and addresses, please? I work for the I.R.S."

The entire bus fell silent as everyone watched to see what would happen next. Laird took a small notebook and pen from the inside pocket of his jacket. He faced his captive audience. "I'm part of a new I.R.S. outreach program," he told the group. "For the next ten minutes I'll be taking confessions. Does anyone have anything he or she wants to tell me?"

Smiles. Soon the whole bus was talking, comparing notes—when they'd first realized he was kidding, and how scared they had been before they caught on. It was difficult to believe these were the same New Yorkers who were supposed to be so gruff and isolated.

"Laird was the most vital, funniest person I ever met," his friend wrote.

Now, in his wheelchair, he faced off against slow-moving flies, waving them away.

"THE gloaming," Laird said.

Janet looked up from her knitting, startled. It was midafternoon, and the living room was filled with bright October sun. "Soon," she said.

He furrowed his brow. A little flash of confusion passed through his eyes, and she realized that for him it was already dark.

He tried to straighten his shawl, his hands shaking. She jumped up to help; then, when he pointed to the fireplace, she quickly laid the logs as she wondered what was wrong. Was he dehydrated? She thought she recalled that a dimming of vision was a sign of dehydration. She tried to remember what else she had read or heard, but even as she grasped for information, facts, her instincts kept interrupting with a deeper, more dreadful thought that vibrated through her, rattling her and making her gasp as she often did when remembering her mistakes, things she wished she hadn't said or done, wished she had the chance to do over. She knew what was wrong, and yet she kept turning away from the truth, her mind spinning in every other possible direction as she worked on the fire, only vaguely noticing how wildly she made the sparks fly as she pumped the old bellows.

Her work was mechanical—she had made hundreds of fires—and soon there was nothing left to do. She put the screen up and pushed him close, then leaned over to pull his flannel pajamas down to meet his socks, protecting his bare shins. The sun streamed in around him, making him appear trapped between bars of light. She resumed her knitting, with mechanical hands.

"The gloaming," he said again. It did sound somewhat like "gloomy," because his speech was slurred.

"When all the world is purple," she said, hearing herself sound falsely bright. She wasn't sure whether he wanted her to talk. It was some time since he had talked—not long, really, in other people's lives, perhaps two weeks—but she had gone on with their conversations, gradually expanding into the silence until she was telling him stories and he was listening. Sometimes, when his eyes closed, she trailed off and began to drift. There would be a pause that she didn't always realize she was making, but if it went on too long he would call out "Mom?" with an edge of panic in his voice, as if he were waking from a nightmare. Then she would resume, trying to create a seamless bridge between what she had been thinking and where she had left off.

"It was really your grandfather who gave me my love for the gloaming," she said. "Do you remember him talking about it?" She looked up politely, expectantly, as if Laird might offer her a conversational reply. He seemed to like hearing the sound of her voice, so she went on, her needles clicking. Afterward, she could never remember for sure at what point she had stopped talking and had floated off into a jumble of her own thoughts, afraid to move, afraid to look up, afraid to know at which exact moment she became alone. All she knew was that at a certain point the fire was in danger of dying out entirely, and when she got up to stir the embers she glanced at him in spite of herself and saw that his fingers were making knitting motions over his chest, the way people did as they were dying. She knew that if she went to get the nurse, Laird would be gone by the time she returned, so she went and stood behind him, leaning over to press her face against his, sliding her hands down his busy arms, helping him along with his fretful stitches until he finished this last piece of work.

LATER, after the most pressing calls had been made and Laird's body had been taken away, Janet went up to his old room and lay down on one of the twin beds. She had changed the room into a guest room when he went off to college, replacing his things with guest-room décor, thoughtful touches such as luggage racks at the foot of each bed, a writing desk stocked with paper and pens, heavy wooden hangers and shoe trees. She made an effort to remember the room as it had been when he was a little boy; she had chosen a train motif, then had to redecorate when Laird decided trains were silly. He had wanted it to look like a jungle, so she had hired an art student to paint a jungle mural on the walls. When he decided *that* was silly, he hadn't bothered her to do anything about it, but had simply marked time until he could move on.

Anne came over, offered to stay, but was relieved to be sent home to her children.

Presently, Martin came in. Janet was watching the trees turn to mere silhouettes against the darkening sky, fighting the urge to pick up a true-crime book, a debased urge. He lay down on the other bed.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"It's so wrong," she said angrily. She

hadn't felt angry until that moment; she had saved it up for him. "A child shouldn't die before his parents. A young man shouldn't spend his early thirties wasting away talking to his mother. He should be out in the world. He shouldn't be thinking about me, or what I care about, or my opinions. He shouldn't have had to return my love to me—it was his to squander. Now I have it all back and I don't know what I'm supposed to do with it," she said.

She could hear Martin weeping in the darkness. He sobbed, and her anger veered away.

They were quiet for some time.

"Is there going to be a funeral?" Martin asked finally.

"Yes. We should start making the arrangements."

"I suppose he told you what he wanted."

"In general. He couldn't decide about the music."

She heard Martin roll onto his side, so that he was facing her across the narrow chasm between the beds. He was still in his office clothes. "I remember being very moved by the bagpipes at your father's funeral."

It was an awkward offering, to be sure, awkward and late, and seemed to come from someone on the periphery of her life who knew her only slightly. It didn't matter; it was perfectly right. Her heart rushed toward it.

"I think Laird would have liked that idea very much," she said.

It was the last moment of the gloaming, the last moment of the day her son died. In a breath, it would be night; the moon hovered behind the trees, already rising to claim the sky, and she told herself she might as well get on with it. She sat up and was running her toes across the bare floor, searching for her shoes, when Martin spoke again, in a tone she used to hear on those long-ago nights when he rarely got home until after the children were in bed and he relied on her to fill him in on what they'd done that day. It was the same curious, shy, deferential tone that had always made her feel as though all the frustrations and boredom and mistakes and rushes of feeling in her days as a mother did indeed add up to something of importance, and she decided that the next round of telephone calls could wait while she answered the question he asked her: "Please tell me—what else did my boy like?" ♦

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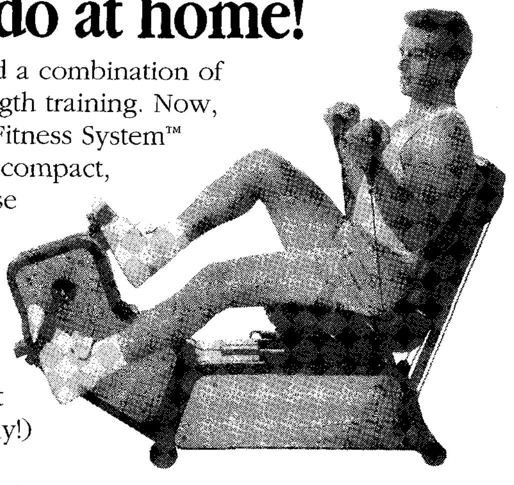

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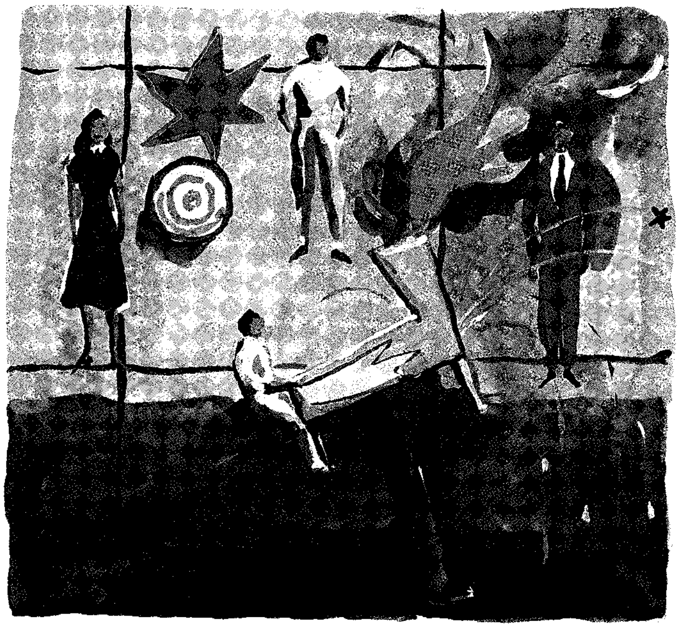
THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

FULL TILT

BY JOHN LAHR

When Pete Townshend hit upon a pinball wizard as the central figure of his rock opera, “Tommy,” he found a solid-gold metaphor for the psychic numbness and the weird optimism of England at the tail end of the nineteen-sixties. It was a brief, bumptious moment of possibility, for which “Tommy” is one of the most splendid epitaphs. Trauma and triumph seemed then to be the integers of pop life, and nobody lived or sang about both parts of that equation more sensationally than Townshend and his group, The Who. Tommy, the aforementioned wizard, is struck deaf, dumb, and blind at the age of four, when his father returns from the war and the child sees him kill the man he finds in his wife's arms. Tommy's famous silence keeps both his family and his splintered self together. To compound his distress, his Uncle Ernie abuses him. Salvation comes in the shape of a pinball table. Tommy's playing of this electric fun machine becomes the gimmick—like Townshend's guitar-wrecking, windmill style of playing—through which he makes himself felt by the world and is lured out of his brooding, impossible solitude. In the end, Tommy gains not only fame but wisdom. No wonder the story has been retold so often: in billions of inches of newsprint about The Who; on The Who's own tours; in the Ken Russell movie; and now in the Broadway show “The Who's Tommy,” at the St. James Theatre. It's the marriage of capitalism and mysticism, in which the hipoisie finds its heart.



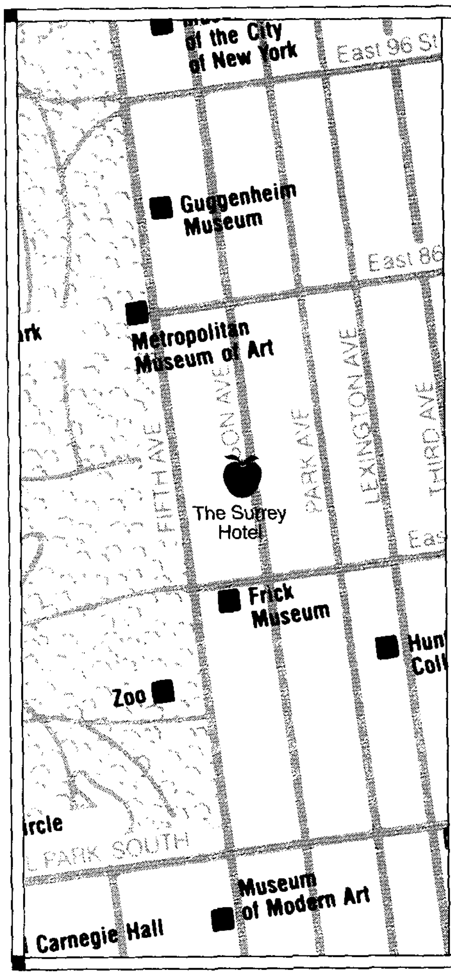
JEAN PHILIPPE DELHOMME

In the original recording, Townshend insisted, correctly, that The Who, and not an orchestra, perform the music. A rock opera had to have rock musicians; and The Who—singer Roger Daltrey, drummer Keith Moon, bass guitarist John Entwistle, and, of course, Townshend himself—were virtuoso performers, whose personalities gave added drama and dynamism to a story in which they not only took parts but had participated as writers. The tale itself was about London, narcissism, celebrity, fans, and the sheer, giddy luck of talent. In other words, it was about them. But the impulse behind a “rock opera” was business, and this is where the current Broadway show and the original hybrid coalesce. Before “Tommy,” Townshend had experimented with two “mini-operas,” “A Quick One” and “Rael,” but the managers of the band, Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, hadn't been sure about pursuing the form. “We were worried about the airy-fairy connotations of calling it an opera,” says Stamp, who now lives in New York. “After all, The Who were a rough, streetwise bunch of London kids.” But he goes on to say, “Rock touring was really shitty. We thought, Why should rock audiences have to listen to music in fuckin' aircraft hangars? What attracted us to the rock-opera idea was that opera houses were run by committee, and not by greedy carnival people, who were always looking to rip us off at the gate. We hit up the opera managers with ‘This is opera and opera's for the people.’ We thought we'd be able to browbeat them into giving us their opera houses, and we did. We got them dirt cheap.”

At the St. James, instead of banks of amplifiers, there's scaffolding studded with TV monitors to broadcast Tommy's electronic celebrity; instead of the band onstage, there is an orchestra under it; instead of a song cycle with great musicians breaking new ground and making new music, there are adequate actors and dancers illustrating the words in prosaic Broadway-musical choreography; instead of a youth culture celebrating its newfound strength, there is a middle-aged audience applauding the memory of youth. "Don't Miss a Word!" says a sign above the stall offering headphones in the lobby, as if clarity were what The Who, one of the loudest rock bands ever, were about. The Who were a fierce experience, not a suburban shuck. "The Who's Tommy," which is going to make everybody a lot of money, is the polyester version—shiny, easy to handle, and thin.

Still, from the first brazen chords of the overture, Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill. It's strong stuff—full of vigor, melody, shrewd insight, and the almost messianic conviction of one of rock and roll's finest messengers. Just to hear the licks again is enough to rouse an audience that has become inured to both the vacuous blowhard bravado and the intemperate whining of the composers who usually work Broadway. Townshend's questing, prickly intelligence comes through loud and clear. If a generation's longing for attention and transcendence needed an anthem, he provided it in Tommy's plaintive reprise "See me, feel me, touch me, heal me." When the opera is sung by The Who in concert, Tommy's predicament is fleshed out in the imagination of the auditor. But when the songs—however superb—are enacted by others, they run into theatrical trouble.

Des McAnuff's production (he also collaborated, with Townshend, on the book, and is the artistic director of the La Jolla Playhouse, in San Diego, where the show was developed) is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma, which no amount of slick, if exhausting, spectacle can resolve. The hero of this famous score is spectacularly passive. The fact that Tommy is, for most of the show, "deaf, dumb, and blind" means that the songs can comment on him but he can't reveal himself to us through action. The central character is unreachable, unknowable, and therefore essentially undramatic. McAnuff's production huffs and puffs to make the scenic surface of the show compelling when the characters can't be. Caught somewhere between light show and light opera, McAnuff misses no opportunity to fill the shallows with dazzle. He does the Second World War in the first five minutes, complete with spinning airplane propellers, Churchill voice-over, machine-gun fire, parachuting soldiers, and a bit of upstage



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concentration-camp barbed wire. He conjures the teen-age Tommy, like a jack-in-the-box, out of a mirrored closet at which his two younger personas gaze. These maneuvers are adroit without being inspired. With John Arnone's sets and Wendall K. Harrington's projections, McAnuff is especially effective in the pinball-arcade scene, as Tommy discovers his métier, and, later, in his breakthrough into greatness, when the pinball machine sparks, smokes, and rises toward the heavens, like some German Expressionist whirlwind. It's an all-blinking, all-flashing, all-caroming bit of showmanship, which nicely matches the energy of the song:

> He's got crazy flipper fingers
> Never seen him fall . . .
> That deaf dumb and blind kid
> Sure plays a mean pinball.

"Tommy" is most arresting when it tries to fathom both the liberation and the trap of fame. "Sensation" captures better than any other rock song I know the imperialism of fame's enchantment, that "new vibration" the song celebrates:

> I'm a sensation.
> I leave a trail of rooted people
> Mesmerized by just the sight
> All these lovers feel me coming
> Love as one—in love tonight.

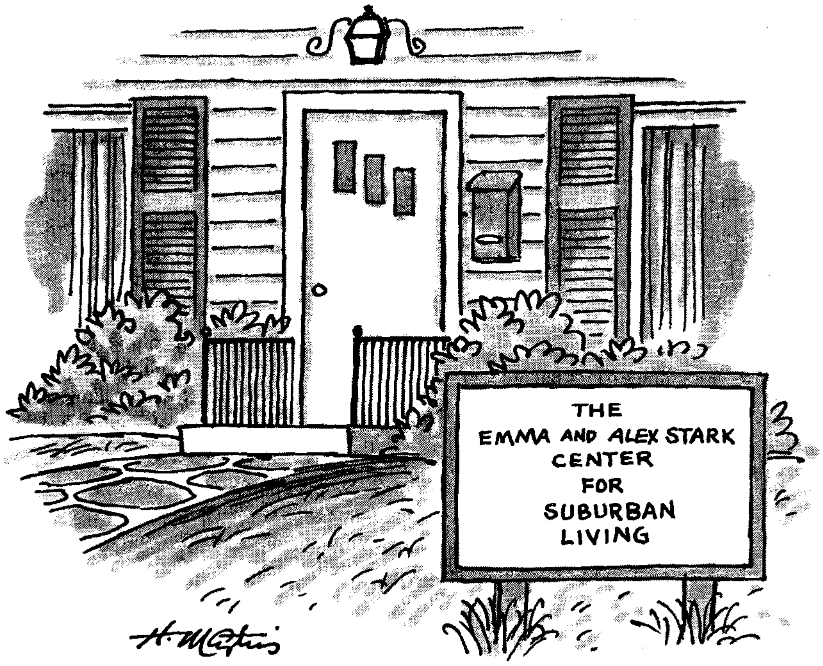
Being spellbound, either by oneself or by others, is one of the fascinating issues the music addresses. The mirror into which Tommy looks, and which holds the memory of the lonely child, is the show's recurring image and its primary clue. Tommy learns to turn his gaze from his own reflection and out to others. In so doing, he moves from the infantile to the adult, from selfishness to community. He also learns disenchantment. As in all fairy tales, it's not the enchanted but the disenchanted who are free. To the fury of his fans, Tommy starts to think against his celebrity:

> I'm free—I'm free
> And freedom lies here in normality.

But normality on Broadway is about as welcome as modesty in a whore. The audience is paying for the extraordinary. And here, at the finale, Townshend brings the audience to its feet with a thematic fillip that is more cunning than all McAnuff's directorial pyrotechnics. Tommy, who has spent a good part of two and a half hours looking at his own reflection, now stares out at the audience and sings:

> Right behind you I see the millions
> On you I see the glory.
> From you I get opinions
> From you I get the story.

Having begun as a hymn to the self, the song turns into a hymn to the customers, reminding them that it is *they* who are the magic and the miracle. At a stroke, pandering to the masses is elevated to the level of metaphysics. The audience, quite naturally, goes crazy. It's a point of view that Broadway musicals, which make a myth of individualism, rarely sing about. But, even if it's suspect in the context of a multimillion-dollar



production, the sentiment is welcome on the American scene, and so is Townshend. With the touring-company dates selling briskly (the show's going on the road for two years), with a book about the making of the musical in progress, and with what feels like a long stay at the St. James virtually assured, "The Who's Tommy" will not be as modest as the pinball wizard about owning its success. But then it's best not to take a star's public protestations of humility too much to heart. Instead of watching Townshend's words, watch his billing. Meanwhile, even those who don't like the show can sit back in their yellow-and-black "Tommy" T-shirts and enjoy the marketing experience. ♦

FUNNY FARM

BY EDITH OLIVER

"A HOPELESS infatuation with the sight gag" is something Tina Howe admits to, in the introduction to her "Three Plays," and that infatuation comes full flower in her "One Shoe Off," a production of Second Stage, which opened a couple of weeks ago, at the Joseph Papp Public, under the nimble direction of Carole Rothman. "One Shoe Off" is about Leonard, an actor who hasn't worked in twelve years, and Dinah, his wife, a costume designer with plenty of stock on hand. They are literally rusticating in a farmhouse in upstate New York. Several trees are growing indoors, and a howling wind keeps banging the living-room door. (This Charles Addams farmhouse, the work of Heidi Landesman, is a sight gag in itself.) The plot involves a dinner party of sorts to which an editor of children's books and his wife, a movie actress, have been invited, and for which the guest of honor, a movie director, turns up late, after being in a bloody accident. All the monkey business—and there is plenty of it—sometimes masks and sometimes underlines the spirit of the play, which is about, among other things, failure and success, marital love and fidelity, and the longing for a grown child who is far from home.

The script is murky in spots, but there is no question about the acting. Jeffrey DeMunn's Leonard, in all his grotesque ups and downs, carries the play. As Dinah, Mary Beth Hurt is, as always, as near perfection as makes no matter. The brutal lechery, self-importance, and hypocrisy of the movie director are well realized by Brian Kerwin. As the cocky editor, Daniel Gerroll couldn't be better, and Jennifer Tilly (new to me) is right and absolutely gorgeous as his wife. The spectacular costumes—and there are lots of them, because Dinah keeps changing her outfits—are the handiwork of Susan Hilferty.

I'M this way, that way about the revival of "Three Men on a Horse" by the National Actors Theatre, at the Lyceum. The play is a beaut, and I only wish that the actors and the director had faith in it. There is much too much frisking around and campy performance. The play was written in 1935, by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott, and it has been revived, in and out of town, innumerable times since, but this was my first exposure. The story (for the benefit of any other innocents) is about a timid young fellow who writes rhymes for greeting cards and whose avocation is doping out the winners of horse races. He never misses and he never bets. But he falls into the hands of three out-of-luck touts, who won't let him go, although his deadline for Mother's Day is closing in, and he agrees to pick a few winners. You wouldn't think there would be enough here for two acts, but there is: the characters are plentiful, and the writing, line by line, is still fresh. Tony Randall does all right, I guess, in the leading role, but he hardly qualifies as a young man; and his colleagues, as I say, are, for the most part, far too busy. One shining exception is my crush Jerry Stiller, who is extremely funny as one of the touts. But even in its non-mint condition "Three Men on a Horse" deserves a run. As Robert Benchley said of the original production, "I take it for granted that 'Three Men on a Horse' is a hit. If it isn't, then I have bruised myself with laughter over nothing." ♦

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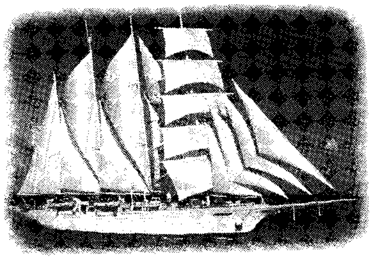

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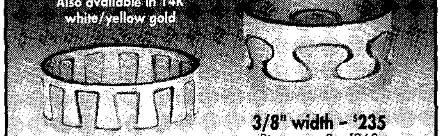

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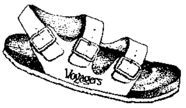

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MUSICAL EVENTS

SHERMAN'S STYLISH SONATAS

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

I WAS once, and only once, on the jury for a big musical competition—a piano competition held at Carnegie Hall several years ago. There was a lot to admire. Marc-André Hamelin, the eventual winner, made his entry into the lists by playing the first movement of Ives's "Concord" Sonata from memory. Alan Gravill, whose career was to prove tragically short, took us carefully and luminously through John Adams's "Phrygian Gates" and a late Beethoven sonata. Each of the other contestants, charged up for the occasion, delivered at least one performance well worth hearing. Then the time came for us to decide, and, as we weighed and pondered and considered, our chairman went over to a piano that was in the room with us. I don't know if it was there by accident, because Carnegie Hall has to have somewhere to store its pianos, or by design, with the idea that we would argue over our verdict musically. Nor can I now recall whether the chairman was going to the keyboard in order to illustrate a point or just to doodle through a pause in the proceedings. What I remember, at the end of that most piano-heavy time in my life, is the sound: the serenity, but also the tingling joy, and the sense of something perfectly, strainlessly achieved, even though the moment was just a stray exercise, over within a few seconds. We'd heard a good many excellent pianists, and some astonishing ones, but we had not heard this. We had not heard grace. That was my introduction to the playing of Russell Sherman.

ROXANNA BIKADOROFF

Recently, there was another, more public opportunity to hear him, when he gave a recital at the Miller Theatre, at Columbia, beginning with Schoenberg's Six Little Pieces, Opus 19. It may be that whatever he had begun with would have seemed exemplary, but the Schoenberg did seem an ideal choice for demonstrating how he often comprehends musical thought as a drama of motifs, of neatly executed identities that rarely extend to more than a few notes. Schoenberg's motifs may be oddly formed—they may be crabs of the musical world—but in the way that Mr. Sherman creates them they are vigorously alive, and their maneuverings make up the whole of each of these pieces, with every note brought into active play. When everything in the music sounds purposeful, there can be no question of awkwardness or difficulty, or of tentativeness in venturing into what was still, in 1911, a new musical world: one of Mr. Sherman's skills is to make Schoenberg sound as lucid as Haydn, and Haydn as complex and willful as Schoenberg. Generalities of style—matters as vague as tonality and atonality—are simply not as interesting, his playing suggests, as what's happening at lower, more intense and intimate levels, where notes are fused into ideas, and where ideas are enlarged, contradicted, pushed, pruned, mused on. Of course, the darkness and the unease in the Schoenberg are still there, but they are absolutely present in what we hear, figured in the notes, and not merely the results of cloudy performance.

This shouldn't be taken to imply that Mr. Sherman's Schoenberg was dry, or that his playing customarily has anything abstract about it. On the contrary, he is a master of musical character, of creating vivid, dynamic shapes by means of color, accentuation, and, perhaps most of all, rhythm. He's also a master of the singing piano, and a master of the instrument's ability to fuse chords into experiences of light. Everything he plays sounds good and clear and unforced. If the effect is to focus on the notes, it's also to show that notes have feelings, too—as appeared most surprisingly when he came to Scriabin's Fourth Sonata. This was, in a way, the least Scriabin-like Scriabin performance I've heard, in that it had so little extravagance of festooning and excited repetition. We were prevented from explaining the music away so easily, and instead asked to consider how the arabesques are made, what they might mean, and how the harmony, below all the rhapsodizing, is moving in regions as bleak and unflinchingly viewed as those which Schoenberg was to reach a few years later, in the pieces we'd heard half an hour earlier.

Another point Mr. Sherman's program allowed him to make was that of the variety and the ubiquity of the sonata principle. Two self-declared sonatas, Scriabin's Fourth and Beethoven's "Waldstein," showed how sonata-style features are strong enough to bind highly irregular forms. (In this respect and in others—the urgent brilliance of melody, sometimes encouraged vocally by the pianist—the century gap between the two pieces seemed irrelevant.) The non-sonatas of two other composers, Schoenberg and Liszt, revealed how elements of sonata might persist (the outer pieces of the Schoenberg set seen as ghosts of first movement and finale), or else be invited in (three disparate pieces—Liszt's "Nuages Gris," "Funérailles," and "Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor"—placed together to make a pseudo-sonata in which the exultant vocality of the last piece both answered and issued from the uncertainty and challenge that had gone before).

On a more particular level, Liszt's music, like Scriabin's, was transfigured by Mr. Sherman's fastening on immediate detail and by his complete virtuoso command—the sort of command that makes it possible for a high-speed ripple to be sure and precise in every detail, with the potential then of being understood as more than a splashy ornament. Mr. Sherman certainly isn't alone these days in insisting on Liszt's seriousness, and in insisting, too—as, implicitly, he did in this program—that we value not only the pieces prized by historians ("Nuages Gris" as a harbinger of atonality, the B-minor Sonata as a key moment in the evolution of musical form) but also those which, like the operatic medleys, lie far from the great paths of musical progress. However, where other performers would have to make the "Lucia di Lammermoor" paraphrase into either an essay in camp or a display of pianistic dexterity, or both, Mr. Sherman's care is for how the bits of the mosaic fit together, how the ideas call for shaping and projection, and how the piano can be made not only to sing (again that brilliant, fine treble line that is so much a special feature of his playing) but also to analyze the act of singing, because it will have to present the notes as detached objects, despite all the subtle dynamic shading that is going into giving it a voice. What resulted, on this occasion, was neither ironic nor self-dramatizing but magnificent and pure.

Before the Liszt, we'd heard a new piece by Gunther Schuller, his Sonata-Fantasia, which fitted well into the context of oblique sonatas and perfectly trimmed virtuosities, whether because Mr. Sherman had devised the evening around it or because Mr. Schuller had composed the work with his Boston colleague in mind. Probably both reasons are valid. Much in the music appears to have been made for this musician: the high singing line, the delicacy of cascades and gambols, the poised chords, the energetic motifs, the textures in three animated layers. There are also echoes, though no more than that, of composers he likes to play, especially those represented on this program. Of the three movements, the first is powered by sonorous chords, in a maestoso tempo, interrupted by faster divagations. The second movement has slow, quiet, fuzzy shadows of these chords, with its own soft flurries around them, and the finale begins stormily, proceeds through a kind of waltz, under a glistening net of high, trilled melody, and ends soon after an abrupt reëncounter with the chords as they were in the first movement.

If one could interpret the work as exhibiting a tension between formal public rhetoric (the maestoso chords) and individual fantasy, with the latter winning out, that would make it particularly Shermanesque. This recital was about showing, not shouting. For all the virtuosity, it had an atmosphere of gentleness. It seemed to represent the furthest this intensely courteous but also intensely private musician would go toward oratory, which was not very far at all. It was at the limit of what he would or could

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permit himself, and therefore a little stressed. Some performances (the Liszt in particular) took nourishment from that; others were perhaps deflected from their aims—from the aims that Mr. Sherman would have achieved playing for a few friends, or in the recording studio. To make just one obvious point, he couldn't, even in a comparatively small theatre, employ the extraordinary fading into extreme pianissimo that he can use on record to round off a gesture.

Until quite recently, Mr. Sherman's records were hard to find, which must be one reason his name is less well known than those of pianists—Maurizio Pollini, Krystian Zimerman, Alfred Brendel—who have been or will be appearing at Carnegie Hall this spring. But there may also be something deliberate in his avoidance of the big stage. In the notes for his recording of four Haydn sonatas, he remarks how Haydn felt his musical development was "related to his independence from the conventions and bustle of the big city" and "to the relative freedom and isolation derived from his long service at the Esterhazy estate." If one were to replace these last four words by "as a teacher," one might read the sentence as Mr. Sherman's confession of his own life's purpose. And just as we may well think we hear Haydn more fully in private genres—the string quartets, the trios, and, as Mr. Sherman plays them, the piano sonatas—so we may prefer to hear Mr. Sherman on record, with the possibility both of a closer musical relationship and of ever new discoveries in his highly nuanced playing.

His two recordings for Albany—the Haydn album (TROY 031) and a disk devoted to Liszt's Transcendental Études (TROY 028)—are generally available; another recording for the same company, of Schubert sonatas, is imminent. Haydn and Liszt, with Schubert (and, so we are promised, Beethoven) to follow: the repertory is curiously close to Mr. Brendel's, though the qualities that link these two pianists—a passion for thinking, and for pursuing thoughts wherever they may lead, whether into absurdity, transcendence, or comedy—are precisely those which make each of them so individual. Both, too, are expert writers on music, and Mr. Sherman's remarks on Haydn and Liszt are totally in tune with his performances, both in what they say and in their manner of speech: graphic, sharp, and metaphorical to a point just this side of whimsy. For instance, the seventh Liszt study, "Eroica," is a playacting emperor: "For he likes to dress up as his own minstrel and then poke fun at his master, who is of course himself." Mr. Sherman takes his fancy further: "Abundant pomp disguises his true intentions, which are to ride (or bet on) his horses, drift away for moody reflections under his favorite linden tree, and practice target shooting. . . . In other words, what we have here is a perfect vehicle for Peter Ustinov."

So apt is this language to how he plays that it's hard to write about Mr. Sherman's recordings other than by quoting his own words. "A diary of the psyche in flights of reeling and despair" is, indeed, what he makes of the first movement of Haydn's C-minor Sonata. Perhaps it's his slight prolongation of pauses, to make them opening mouths of silence, that chiefly signals the despair, while the reeling is in the different treatments, by composer and pianist in union, of the same motivic material. What also vitalizes this movement is Mr. Sherman's characteristic integration of ornament into the essential nature of the motif, and his equally characteristic use of the formal repeat as an opportunity for minuscule but telling variation.

There are splendors, too, in the Liszt recording: the ferocious delicacy of "Feux Follets," and its cherishing of the banal, or the crucial weight (often a weight of unbearable lightness) given to this composer's harmony, or, again, the strongly sung character of the melodies. Because Mr. Sherman's phrasing is vocal rather than pianistic, the physical effort of the studies falls away: one isn't aware of rampaging fingers, only of rampaging notes.

Still, it's the Haydn record that's the more particular achievement, the nearer approach to an ideal of music in which tiny gestures—flicks of the musical wrist—can speak about the necessity of patience, the virtues of quietness and smallness, the harvest of self-questioning, and the manifold glories and surprises of the world. ♦

ON TELEVISION

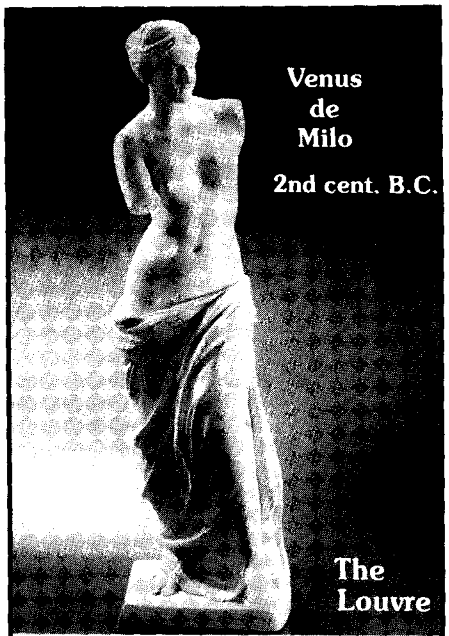
FUNKY TOWN

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

NEW YORK CITY has been not only a backdrop for television series but a crusty character in its own right. In the fifties and sixties, TV shows co-starring New York tended to be case studies of lives that had fallen through the cracks. Two-bit junkies, gamblers deep into loan sharks, hookers trying to go straight—they could always be found shivering in shabby rooms, forced to stay on the other side of daylight. The urban authorities on shows like "N.Y.P.D.," "Naked City," and "East Side/West Side" carried their heavy caseloads in their very postures, entering fleabag hotels and slum houses like pallbearers. The city they served resembled a holding cell. The brick-window Purgatory their deadbeats paced was a prison version of the Bronx-kitchen realism of live TV drama by Paddy Chayefsky and Reginald Rose, among others, which in turn was a hand-me-down from the tenement viewpoint of thirties playwrights like Clifford Odets. But in those plays everyone was bogged down in family. On the neorealist TV shows, everyone was a discarded fragment. Once the camera ventured outside ("N.Y.P.D.," "Naked City," and "East Side/West Side" were shot on location in New York), it would investigate vacant lots, bridge underpasses, tar-paper rooftops—any place it might trip over a dead body, an abandoned baby, or some other token of urban indifference. Considering how smiling and suburban so much of TV was then, these semidocumentary safaris into the asphalt jungle at least had the virtue of being adult. At their best, they administered a cold slap, deglamorizing New York to an almost puritanical degree.

At first sight, Fox's ambitious anthology series "Tribeca" (Tuesdays), filmed in lower Manhattan, would seem to be a decisive break from the gray funk of earlier New York shows. Where those black-and-white dramas had the grainy pores of newspaper photos, "Tribeca" is a glossy-magazine layout, its opening credits tripping the night fantastic, as tribal cries punctuate the soundtrack. Aspiring to cinema, the show seeks to catch the downtown spark of Martin Scorsese's "After Hours" and the Scorsese segment in "New York Stories," which unleashed Nick Nolte as a two-fisted Action painter. In the show the neighborhood of Tribeca is a model yuppie village of casual taste, where people sip cappuccino, spread Brie on their bagels, and walk dogs of noble lineage. The interiors are light, airy, dust-free. The show is a love poem to loft space. But behind the posh hipness of "Tribeca" beats the heart of Paddy Chayefsky, an organ you couldn't kill with a stick.

The irony is that the creative instigator of the series is the last man you would accuse of pushing "heart." The executive producer of "Tribeca" is Mr. Urban Nihilism himself, Robert De Niro, who, not incidentally, has major business interests in the Tribeca area. The promo for the show reads "Robert De Niro presents Tribeca," which harks back to a hallowed tradition of movie stars lending their aura to "quality" television. In the golden age of TV, June Allyson, Joseph Cotten, Dick Powell, Robert Montgomery, and Loretta Young served as hosts of anthology series. (A creature of pure camp, Young would sail toward the camera in a Cinderella gown, introducing each episode of "The Loretta Young Show" as if it were a recital.) De Niro, never known as an actor for his suave way with words—English is his third language, after shrugging and hitting people—has wisely declined the chore of providing a prologue each week. Continuity is instead secured by a pair of regulars—a



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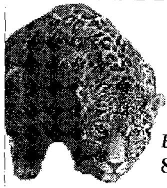

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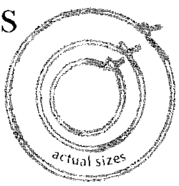

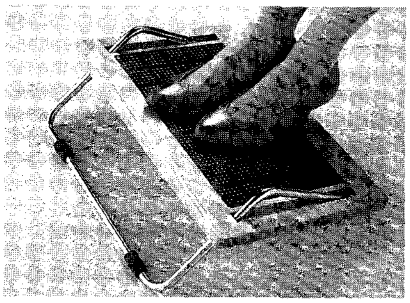

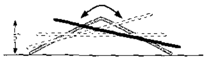

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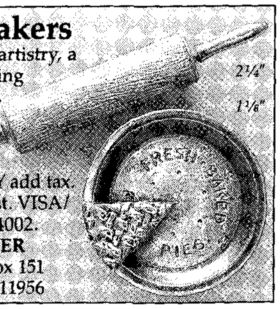

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restaurateur named Harry (Philip Bosco) and a black patrolman on horseback named Carleton (Joe Morton). Both function as lay social workers—their jobs are a pretext for helping people with their problems. Harry, who describes himself as a "nosy old Jew," draws troubled customers to him like a warm hearth. And, unlike most New York cops, Carleton doesn't shun eye contact. He looks everyone on his beat full in the face, as if to say, "Tell me where the hurt is."

There's hurt aplenty in "Tribeca." In the première, Larry Fishburne played a cop who lost his brother to random street crime. When he sat hooded in the rain, the entire sky seemed to be grieving. On another show, Stephen Lang went shaggy, as a homeless man determined to give an ex-Marine buddy a proper burial. His mission was intercut with tirades from an angry black street poet, who glared at the camera and apostrophized: "I am New York City/ My skillet-head friend, my fat-bellied comrade/Citizens—break wind with me." Even an episode in a less agonized vein, featuring Peter Boyle as an unlikely Lothario in a tobacco-leaf toupee ("I've given up my life as a lover," he announces, once he realizes the pain he's caused), went for poignance. An actor capable of wounded-buffalo effects (remember his monster in "Young Frankenstein"?), Boyle was scaled down here to average-schmo status. Like Arthur Miller's Willy Loman and Chayefsky's Marty, he was the human condition in capsule form. For it is written that the world is full of little guys who dream big: we should heed them, for they have not forgotten how to hope. Citizens, break wind with me!

Reflecting De Niro's imprint, "Tribeca" has far more actor say-so than most television series. The actor is often the auteur. Melanie Mayron, formerly of "thirtysomething," spun an episode around an incident involving her grandmother. Stephen Lang created his homeless character from street level, having once slept rough for a week. Before the cameras rolled, he spent a couple of twelve-hour sessions discussing the ramifications of his character with one of the show's producers. All very admirable, but you have to wonder if most actors don't have more impact when they're restrained from building a character cell by biological cell and are forced to execute simple, urgent moves in an expedient context. Part of the kick in watching reruns of anthology series of the past is seeing Steve McQueen, Jon Voight, Dustin Hoffman, and Robert Redford doing fast bits of beaded-sweat acting before they became big names. There's almost no crisp, throwaway action in "Tribeca." Every gesture seems padded with premeditation. Actors have become so politicized now that even when they're not taking overt positions they stiffen like sandwich boards, advertising their integrity.

Despite the sexy light that bathes "Tribeca" like some bottled import from Rome, the series isn't a convincing sell for the city. The show doesn't really believe in its own upscale brew. The real New York is too far gone. On "East Side/West Side," say, New York's social ills were deep-seated but treatable; they could be remedied with the right laying on of hands. According to the liberal faith of the time, all that was lacking to aid the inner city were will and resources—properly administered programs. Build the youth center, and they will come. On "Tribeca," the city's malaise is chronic, existential. The expressions of hope come in shallow breaths. You feel that if Peter Boyle's lover boy were to grab hold of Ivana Trump, or Stephen Lang's homeless man were to land a room with a view, he would greet his good fortune with a shrug. It's been said that a serious, prestige show like "Tribeca" is the Fox network's way of doing penance for bubble-gum hits like "Beverly Hills 90210." I don't buy it, and, besides, no one need apologize for "Beverly Hills 90210." It's a fun addiction, in part because its actors are young and pretty and aren't trying to uphold the sky. Watching an ensemble series like "90210," you learn to relate to the characters; watching an anthology series like "Tribeca," you have to start fresh each week. And as everyone knows, it's hard making new friends in New York. Nobody wants to come out and play. ♦

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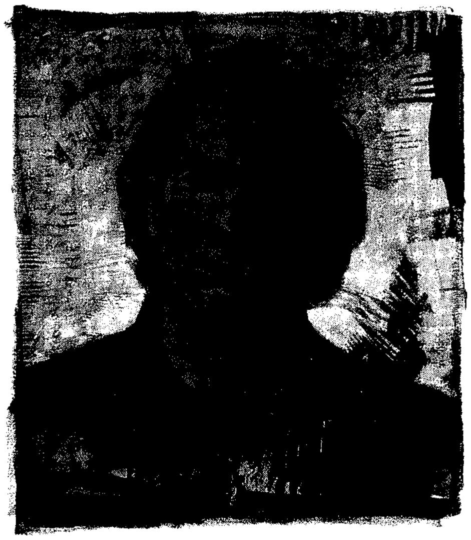
BAD BLOOD

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

NEAR the beginning of George A. Romero's "The Dark Half," the hero, a novelist and college teacher named Thad Beaumont (Timothy Hutton), stands in front of a blackboard on which the word "duality" is written, and delivers a lecture on the "inner and outer beings" of fiction writers. The creative process, he says, involves recognizing the lawless, instinct-driven unconscious and then surrendering to it. You have to "let it out," he says. "Let it party; give it the car keys and let it ride." Thad speaks from experience. His greatest success has come not from the serious, "literary" novels that he labors over and publishes under his own name but from the series of exceptionally nasty, violent thrillers that he writes as George Stark. Thad's wife, Liz (Amy Madigan), seems like the only person who prefers the finely wrought insights of his respectable fiction to the unsavory kicks of the Stark books. Stark's novels are best-sellers, and even Thad's agent admits, "I read George Stark because it's fun; I read Thad Beaumont because it's my job." The movie implies, rather slyly, that the judgment of Thad's agent and his reading public is sounder than his wife's—that the gruesome pulp he churns out as Stark is actually superior to the products of his better self. There's an element of special pleading in this suggestion: Stephen King, who wrote the novel on which Romero's script for "The Dark Half" is based, has worked almost exclusively in the disreputable genre of horror fiction, and his grisly imagination has made him a very wealthy man; and Romero's reputation as a filmmaker rests on gory low-budget shockers like "Night of the Living Dead," "Martin," and "Dawn of the Dead." "The Dark Half" makes a persuasive case for the virtues of low-down genre fiction, especially if you think of the film as a stylized exploration of the peculiar dynamics of a writer's life and compare it with recent, more obviously ambitious movies on similar themes—Jane Campion's "An Angel at My Table," the Coen brothers' "Barton Fink," David Cronenberg's "Naked Lunch." "The Dark Half" is by far the most entertaining picture of this bunch; it's also the most intelligent and the most honest. In their own way, King and Romero give the mystery of the creative instinct a thorough airing—take it for a long, recklessly speedy ride, with the top down the whole time.



Night of the living novelist: Timothy Hutton in "The Dark Half."

You may snicker at the bluntness of the exposition in the lecture-hall scene, and when, soon after, a creepy fan (played with alarming, maggoty intensity by Robert Joy) threatens to expose the hero's dual literary identity you're likely to guess what the story's basic gimmick is going to be: George Stark will come to life, endangering the hero's mental equilibrium and, not so incidentally, the physical well-being of everyone else. Thad Beaumont thwarts the fan's attempt to blackmail him by outing himself to a *People* reporter. With the encouragement of his wife, who has always been disturbed by the ease and conviction with which her husband invented the vile particulars of Stark's world, he takes the opportunity to bury his shameful (but lucrative) alter ego for good. Egged on by a *People* photographer, the

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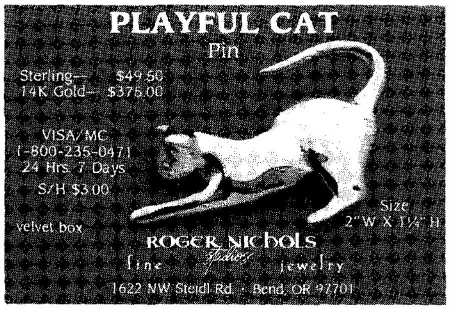

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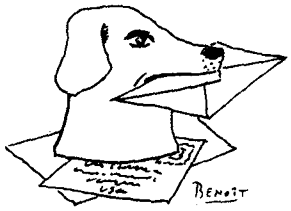
Beaumonts pose with the headstone of George Stark, whose epitaph reads "Not a Very Nice Guy." They look a little uneasy, and they're right to: it's out of this joke grave—the conceptual resting place of an imaginary entity—that the flesh-and-blood George Stark (also played by Hutton) rises. George, like the ravenous zombies of Romero's "Dead" movies, hangs on to his sort-of-life with appalling persistence; like the killing-machine hero of "his" books, he is, first and last, a survivor.



The idea is a simple one, but in horror fiction the simplest notions are usually the best. There's a certain obviousness built into the genre. The guiding impulse of stories like King's is literal-mindedness: something abstract is treated as if it were concrete. Concepts of evil take on the bodies of large beasts with powerful jaws; memories (guilty ones, in particular) become ghosts; and unwholesome impulses and animal instincts tend to pop into being as doubles. In "The Dark Half" we're asked to believe that Thad and his nightmare adversary were once identical twins; Thad, we're told, somehow consumed his brother early in their mother's pregnancy and managed to get born alone. It's not tough to figure out that George Stark is the incarnation of the hero's baser nature (original sin, or the id, or the preëvolutionary reptile brain, or whatever). What's refreshing about "The Dark Half" is its willingness to blurt out its ideas on "duality" and "inner and outer beings"; its directness is admirable.

Besides, the narrative conceit has, for all its apparent simplicity, a core of real wit. We've all heard writers gas on about how characters can "take on a life of their own," and it always sounds false and self-congratulatory, as if artists were gods revelling in their power to create life out of nothingness and admiring the vitality of the worlds they've set in motion. And horror stories in which fictional characters come to life and turn on their creator usually aren't very interesting, because we suspect that the notion doesn't correspond to anything essential in the writer's experience. King's notion of a pseudonym run amok does correspond to something—to the writer's sense that he's not entirely himself when he's absorbed in the difficult process of composition, that he turns into someone else (and not necessarily someone better). "It's all me," Thad says at one point in the movie, and then quickly revises himself: "It's all part of me." It's easy for artists to become alienated from the personas they adopt in their work, and that's an emotion that non-artists can recognize, too: the nagging feeling that the aspects of yourself you've cultivated in order to do your job have somehow taken over everything else. George Stark is a personality trait that has been overdeveloped, and the tenacity with which it resists Thad's attempts to rid himself of it is wonderfully suggestive. Stark, who does most of his damage with swift and shockingly precise strokes of a straight razor, isn't troubled—as his "good" half is—by hesitancy or scruples or self-doubt. He's mean and ruthless, but he's also the most *efficient* part of Thad; and he's the part that the world has rewarded.

The sick joke of "The Dark Half" is that it takes a tremendous effort of will for Thad to destroy his evil double. George is a bad habit that's hard to break, and it isn't until the very end—several corpses and calamities past the initial attempt to go cold turkey—that Thad seems truly committed to kicking this addiction. (He's like a writer who's afraid his imagination would dry up if he eliminated cigarettes, or booze, or certain key neuroses.) And George, who moves with the wiry grace of the young Elvis ("Are You Lonesome Tonight?" plays on the soundtrack when he appears), really seems to enjoy himself a lot more than Thad does. He generates all the lurid thrills, and most of the laughs, in the picture, and he brings out the best in both Romero and Hutton. Romero's work here is his sharpest and most inventive since "Dawn of the Dead," back in 1979: Stark's razor murders are brilliantly staged, and the villain's sendoff, which features an absurdly large flock of birds, is a horror-movie tour de force, beautiful and spooky and exhilarating. Just before the climax, there's a terrific scene in which Thad and George, each armed with a pencil, try to settle their dispute with a high-midnight writing showdown in

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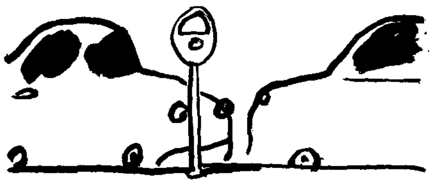
Thad's windowless, womblike study, and once again only one of them will get out alive; when Romero mixes irony with terror, as he does in this sequence, he's peerless. Hutton—an underrated actor, who hasn't had many decent roles in the past few years—attacks his juicy dual role greedily. His performance as Stark is a funny and uninhibited piece of comic-book art. He makes a great grinning psycho, and he gives the character a perverse charm: Stark is so unself-conscious, so comfortable with who he is, that he's sort of likable. Hutton's scariest moments, actually, come when he's playing Thad: every now and then, a bit of Stark-like viciousness bubbles up as the high-minded professor and littérateur is talking to his wife or playing with his kids, and the effect is chilling.

Like all good genre craftsmen, King and Romero seem comfortable with who they are, and they clearly believe in what they're doing. The picture zooms from exposition to climax with a crazy, headlong momentum that's fuelled by the entertainers' conviction that the low road they're travelling is really the best—the most direct and the most scenic—way to get from here to there. When a movie is as much fun, and as respectful of the audience's intelligence, as "The Dark Half" is, you're not inclined to argue. In "Danse Macabre," King's 1981 collection of essays on the principles of his chosen genre, he writes that the horror movie "deliberately appeals to all that is worst in us." Sounding a lot like Professor Beaumont, he goes on to say, "It is morbidity unchained, our most base instincts let free, our nastiest fantasies realized. . . . For these reasons, good liberals often shy away from horror films. . . . I like to see the most aggressive of them—'Dawn of the Dead,' for instance—as lifting a trapdoor in the civilized forebrain and throwing a basket of raw meat to the hungry alligators swimming around in that subterranean river beneath." When "The Dark Half" is all over, you slink into the sunlight feeling bracingly illiberal and very well fed. ♦



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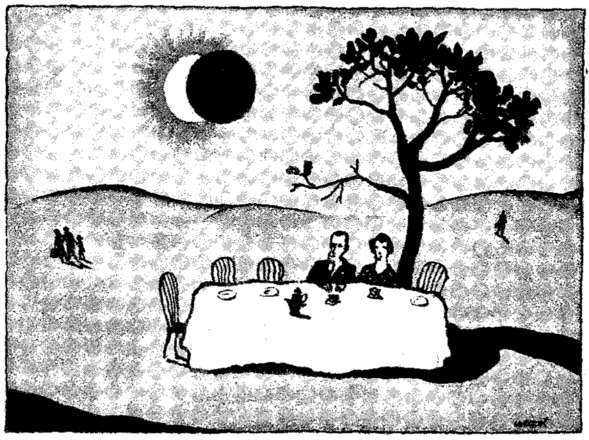
BOOKS

THE DECLINING MIDDLE

BY JAMES LARDNER



In the early nineteen-eighties, a handful of young economists and economics-minded journalists began to worry about what they said was a pivotal change in the nation's course: away from the broad-based prosperity of the postwar years (when it had been widely assumed that the middle class would someday "absorb the poor") and toward a Third World-like division of wealth and income. In "The Deindustrialization of America," published in 1982, Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone, then of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston College, respectively, argued that American companies had reacted to the adversities of the seventies in ways that boded ill for Americans in general—by closing plants, cutting capital investment, moving jobs overseas, and shifting resources from manufacturing to finance and services. The effect of these policies was to preserve and, in some cases, enhance profits, but at the cost, according to Harrison and Bluestone, of a new disconnection between corporate profitability and national economic health. What was implicit in their analysis became explicit in a 1983 *Atlantic* article by the journalist Robert Kuttner, who pointed to an "increasing concentration of jobs at the extremes of the country's range of earnings," and asserted that "the country's future as a middle-class society is in jeopardy."

The economics profession as a whole treated these warnings with disdain. At the conservative Heritage Foundation, the liberal Brookings Institution, and points in between, the declining-middle theorists were dismissed as naïve ideologues who had been listening to too many stories of steelworkers turned hamburger-flippers and, in their ignorance of history, didn't understand that such dislocations were mere footnotes in the long march toward higher productivity and greater opportunity. "There is only one problem with this trend," Robert J. Samuelson condescendingly observed in the *National Journal.* "It doesn't exist."

The declining-middle theorists were faulted for, among other methodological slipups, overextrapolating from a stretch of years that encompassed an oil-price shock and a recession; ignoring the possible mitigating effects of taxes and transfer payments; and making a facile distinction between manufacturing and services, and the supposed virtues of the former and vices of the latter. On one level, the indictment was completely valid, for they were guilty of trying to understand something that was not yet statistically clear. That being the case, though, it is remarkable how well they did understand—or, at any rate, how well their understanding comports with the firmer impressions and the less disputed data of the present day.

Inequality, it is now agreed, was growing, and it was doing so independently of any recession. Between 1977 and 1989, the pretax income of the highest-earning one per cent of American households rose from three hundred and fifteen thousand dollars to five hundred and sixty thousand dollars—an increase of seventy-seven per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of full-time year-round workers with earnings at or below the poverty line, having declined from 21.2 per cent to 12.5 per cent between 1963 and 1970, and having hovered in the twelve-to-fourteen-per-cent range through the seventies, had risen to 18.9 per cent. These things added up to a phenomenon that transcended statistics: a story of wealthy Americans who were gaining faster than ever, and of middle-class Americans who felt poorer and more vulnerable than their parents—or, to put it another way, of middle-income Americans who didn't quite feel middle-class. Moreover, the declining-middle theorists had identified (and their critics were doing their best to obscure) a trend that threatened ideas about opportunity and social mobility in which the nation had a deep psychic investment.

What had been obvious to a lot of non-experts became acceptable to a broad swath of economists in the late eighties, when the profession began sifting through the statistical returns on what the Bush Administration's publicists dubbed the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history. How to explain the quirky fact that a great many poor and middle-class Americans weren't sharing in the merriment? One tempting theory—at first widely embraced by economists with and without federal-government connections—blamed a sudden swelling of the labor supply in the form of adult baby boomers and working mothers. In a series of low-key articles and a book, "Dollars and Dreams," which came out in 1987, the labor economist Frank Levy made a persuasive case that in fact wages had stopped growing in the early seventies and incomes had been getting more unequal since 1979. These trends, Levy argued, were more severe than a superficial reading of the statistical record indicated. The demographic side of the story as he read it was the way in which the shift toward smaller families and two-income households had allowed many Americans to maintain or increase their levels of consumption (and gain access to wonder products like VCRs and microwaves) despite falling wages and a new sense of economic fragility. These new living patterns, along with the unprecedented borrowing of the eighties, were "tricks" that created an illusion of continued prosperity. Levy added that Americans were running out of tricks.

Levy was describing, not prescribing, and he wrote in measured language of the kind that economists of all persuasions could relate to. Bluestone and Harrison's book "The Great U-Turn," which appeared in 1988, was, by contrast, a call for action. But along the way the authors carefully addressed and refuted a number of criticisms of the declining-middle idea, and their book, like Levy's, became a central point of reference in what was before long a rich body of literature—books and articles, scholarly and popular, by, among other authors, Barbara Ehrenreich, Lester Thurow, Robert Reich, Juliet Schor, and William Julius Wilson—on income polarization, deindustrialization, the erosion of middle-class jobs, and the rippling effects of these problems across American society.

If Levy, Bluestone, and Harrison may be said to have provided the proof, the credit for getting the theory into the mass market belongs to Kevin Phillips' "The Politics of Rich and Poor," a 1990 book, whose main significance lay not in what it added to the argument (fairly little) but in the identity of its author. When the architect of what, in 1969, he had aptly dubbed "The Emerging Republican Majority" denounced the Reagan and Bush Administrations for lining the pockets of the wealthy and sending the economy into "capitalist overdrive," it was an early signal (six months before the Gulf War propelled George Bush's approval ratings to heights of putative unbeatability) that the winds were shifting. With Phillips' endorsement, the theory of middle-class decline had crossed over—from left to right, and from the campus to the shopping mall.

These days, it is hard to find an economist or a policymaker who does not express some anxiety about the American economy's ability to produce the sort of jobs on which middle-class security depends, although many, in moving from denial to acceptance, have dispensed with the intermediate step of acknowledging that their views have changed. As a social and economic phenomenon, income polarization has meant a great deal of hardship for a great many people. As an intellectual one, it's that rare clear case—a comfort to every academic or social critic who has ever suffered from feelings of marginality—of a fringe theory that has won over

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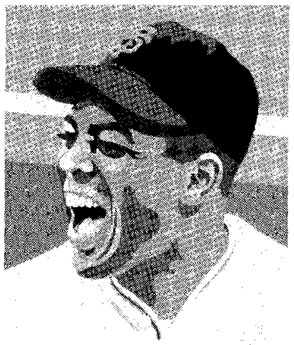

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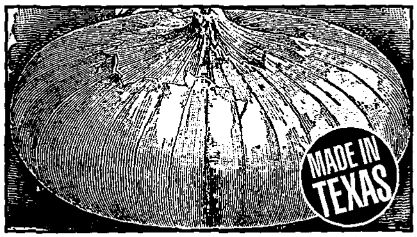

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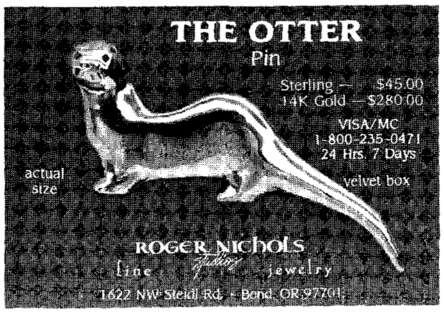

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the experts and worked its way into the thinking of society at large.

"The Politics of Rich and Poor" was an oddity: a best-seller about economics. Still, Kevin Phillips' readership was tiny next to the audience reached in 1992 by a man who deserves to be called the great popularizer of middle-class decline. Bluestone, Harrison, and Kuttner were part of a circle of economic thinkers which included Reich, Thurow, Laura Tyson, and Derek Shearer; through the vehicle of the Economic Policy Institute (founded by Reich, Thurow, and Kuttner, among others), and through Reich's personal ties to Bill Clinton, the insights and ideas of these people formed a conspicuously large part of the Governor of Arkansas's economics education, and they had a profound effect on his campaign for President. At times, it is true, Clinton treated the middle-class issue simply as a stick to beat his less sensitive adversaries with, but it was clear that he had actually read and absorbed much of the literature. To follow his speeches and question-and-answer sessions was, in effect, to watch a long televised seminar on inequality and its roots and remedies—a seminar that is now continuing in the form of debate over the Clinton Administration's economic program.

That program, with its emphasis on investment in children, infrastructure, worker training, and advanced technologies, is the clearest evidence of the attention that Clinton and his advisers have paid to the declining-middle literature. But its influence can also be seen in more subtle ways. As a candidate, and as President, Clinton has refused to lay the blame for the sorry state of the economy entirely on the former White House management; in that omission, he implicitly acknowledges one of the consistent themes of the declining-middle theorists—that the most worrisome trends in our economy, however much they may have been exacerbated by the Reagan and Bush Administrations, predated them, and were not fundamentally government's doing to begin with. In its personnel decisions, too, the new Administration has broken with custom: the Brookings Institution—principal supplier of economists to every Democratic President in memory—has been all but ignored. In effect, the economics establishment has been cast into policymaking oblivion as punishment for its sunny reading of the eighties' record—for the crime of failing to see the forest for the trees, and ridiculing those who did.

KATHERINE NEWMAN, who has written two books on the perils of being a middle-class American in the late twentieth century, is an anthropologist. "Falling from Grace," which came out in 1988, was based on interviews with people who had lost highly paid blue- and white-collar jobs during the great industrial contraction of the late seventies and early eighties; Newman was writing about a societal failure, which, she pointed out, was often experienced as individual failure. In her latest book, "Declining Fortunes: The Withering of the American Dream" (Basic Books; $23), she is writing about Americans whose disappointments stem not from a sudden blow to pride and pocketbook but from the slow discovery that they will never be able to replicate the middle-class comfort of their childhoods, to say nothing of grander aspirations. Her subjects are baby boomers—men and women who experienced the economic tumult of the seventies and eighties as young adults. This is not unfamiliar subject matter, but in Newman's telling the consequences of "postindustrial decline" range well beyond the usual, quantifiable difficulties. She writes, for example, about retired grandparents separated from their grandchildren by a housing market that excludes many baby boomers from the communities where they grew up, and about not so young couples plunged into the brave new world of fertility-boosting technologies by their decision to give priority to career considerations in their prime childbearing years. The "unseen hands" of the economy reach into decisions about "when to marry, when to have children, where to live, how easily we can remain close to our extended families, whether we will be able to enjoy our sunset years or will have to fret over every dime," Newman writes. "And on all of these counts, the largest living generation of Americans is doing worse, enjoying less of the good life" than its parents.

"Declining Fortunes" is based on interviews with members of some sixty families that settled after the war in a newly suburbanized New Jersey town, to which the author has given the pseudonym Pleasanton. She describes it as "typical," but its typicality has come to include a severe class schism between the older residents, who ran the gamut of middle-class occupations, and the younger ones, who, what with a steep rise in property values, tend to be "very highly paid professionals." Few children of the postwar settlers still live within easy visiting range.

In Newman's inventory of the forces that made Pleasanton possible she makes a proper fuss over the Works Progress Administration (which built roads joining cities and developable farmland), the G.I. Bill, and the Federal Home Loan program, and she is clear-eyed about the "real-estate madness" that allowed suburbia's settlers to get rich "by sitting tight and doing almost nothing"—the same madness that later accelerated the dispersal of their children. Because Americans are at least as strongly disinclined to credit the structural causes of success as of failure, however, she observes that "the hand of government—the country's national investment in this new middle class—is subtracted from the moral tales" that the postwar generation tells. In their economic autobiographies, the story is one of "depression deprivation, wartime sacrifice, and struggling married couples who never went out to dinner or bought new cars."

Newman presents the economic lives of these postwar parents as a sort of fairy tale with only one blot: the troubles of their grown-up children. Of course, this is too simple: she skips over some large social problems that reared their heads long before the first hints of postindustrial decline—sterile suburbs, juvenile delinquency, and the alienation of breadwinners from their children, to name a few. (A recent book that richly addresses these issues, and also the ones that concern Newman, is Donald Katz's "Home Fires"—a history of a single suburban family from the war to the present.) Still, there is essential truth in Newman's point that the postwar parents "staked much of their own sense of success on the lives of their children" and "things did not go according to plan." The boomers "are in trouble," she writes. "Many are discovering what it means to go backward. This tangled reality has become a problem that everyone—boomer and postwar parent alike—must explain."

If Newman occasionally oversteps, equally often she arrives at the sort of eye-opening generalizations that are the social sciences' reason for being. The postwar parents, she writes, make morality tales of their children's lives, just as they do of their own. Reluctant to see their sons and daughters as victims of impersonal economic forces, they "cannot help but think that the next generation is seriously flawed." They may understand, on some level, that home ownership has become a wispy goal for a great many baby boomers—hardly real enough to plan for—but they can't help suspecting that the kids would be able to muster a down payment if only they didn't eat out so much. Of course, there is some rough justice in their criticism: the boomers would be better off, as a generation, if they had saved and invested more, and borrowed less. The frugal habits of their elders did help bring about the postwar boom, but the boom, in turn, eroded the habits. Many of the boomers, having absorbed their parents' homilies, harbor similar criticisms of themselves and their peers, and—the final wrinkle in this complex pattern of intergenerational judging—the parents, insofar as they blame their children, also blame themselves for the way they raised them.

Sympathy is Newman's only policy recommendation. The boomers, she says, deserve better than to be linked in the public mind with the cold acquisitiveness of yuppies, who "never constituted more than a small fraction of the boomer population"; they are entitled to "some recognition of the price they have had to pay for maturing in the wrong place at the wrong time." If her book has value for the men and women currently

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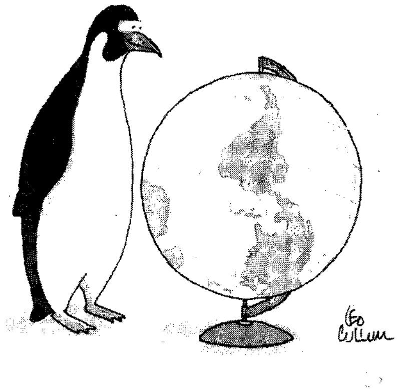

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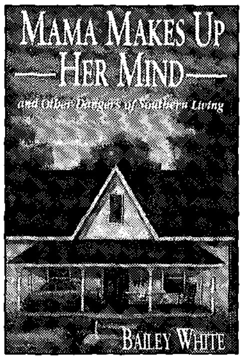

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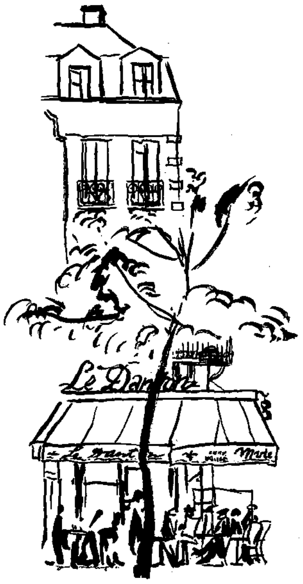
at work in Washington plotting the nation's economic renewal, it may lie in her reminder that the country's woes result not simply from our present weakness but from our former strength. Our decline has a psychological as well as an economic dimension: it's a matter of people who were raised for one set of conditions being presented with another.

VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE, in a speech earlier this year, invited the American automobile industry to dream of becoming "dominant" again. The Vice-President, like the President, is a baby boomer. When people of their generation think of good times, they instinctively imagine a return to America's postwar glory, but such a picture may be a setup for fresh disappointment. A more realistic national objective for now might be a secure footing in the First World; the United States could do worse than learn to be just another advanced industrial nation, if that status brought such blessings as universal health care, long vacations, and decent jobs for people without special advantages—things that Western Europe and Japan take for granted and we now conspicuously lack.

How might this objective be achieved? For Bluestone, Harrison, and others on the left, who tend to see the inequality trend as a result of shortsighted decisions made by corporate managers with too much power, the remedy is an "industrial policy"-style program of incentives, regulation, and public investment intended to encourage longer-term thinking. The political obstacles facing such proposals are powerfully illustrated by the success of the Senate Republicans in checking the Administration's modest (by just about everyone's assessment) "stimulus package." Beyond the anti-government argument that has united the Republicans, however, lies another, perhaps more telling criticism of industrial policy: that even if it helped make the economy more efficient and competitive, it might not reverse (and might even accelerate) the trend toward inequality, because, it is said, we are experiencing nothing less than the rise of an Information Age meritocracy—the sort of deep, long-term trend that is beyond any society's capacity to greatly alter.

One of the more cogent presentations of this argument is to be found in Mickey Kaus's "The End of Equality" (Basic Books; $25), which appeared—uncoincidentally—in the thick of the Presidential race. Kaus, a journalist and social critic based at *The New Republic,* was sending a policy memo to the Democratic Party on the eve of what he uneasily hoped would be its return to power. The United States, he argued, was rapidly becoming the society that "the guidance counselors warned us about," in which people without college degrees would be "sunk," and small differences in skill and talent would acquire profound economic importance.

By and large, the apostles of the meritocracy theory have taken a rather callous view of income inequality. Kaus, by contrast, musters a great deal of indignation at the high-living attitudes and escapist tendencies of the new economic élite, and at a vicarious middle-class snobbery that takes the form of "fascination, respect, envy, and pathetic attempts at imitation." He accepts the private sector's reward structure as largely inevitable; yet, at the same time, he wants to do something about it. His remedy (drawing on the ideas of the political philosopher Michael Walzer, who has tried to identify some realms of life where money ought not to rule) is the creation of a spruced-up and expanded "public sphere" of parks, libraries, schools, medical facilities, and communal places and spaces of all kinds where people of all incomes and social standings can meet with their heads held high. Kaus would leave the employment and pay arrangements of the private sector alone but use this public sphere to "block" the transmission of income differences into pervasive class differences.



Kaus is an ornery writer who seems incapable of presenting an idea except in the framework of a quarrel with its purported enemies. In this book, they consist of a group of people he identifies as "money liberals"—a faction that may exist more in his mind than anywhere else. And there is something very strange in the juxtaposition of his powerful summons to improve the commons, on the one hand, and his singularly passive attitude toward the private sector's personnel practices, on the other. You can't help wondering how a nation could possibly strike such a strong blow for equality in one sphere while calmly tolerating ever greater inequality in the other. Nevertheless, in focussing on the increasingly frayed quality of life in the public sphere Kaus gets at something real, important, and neglected. The United States has become a place where your neighborhood video store is still open at 10 P.M., while the library is closed at midday; where an advertising agency owns more computers and fax machines than it knows what to do with, while teachers have to wait in line to use a school's one functioning copying machine. A national commitment to closing this private-public gap would have the large incidental benefit of creating new areas of fruitful employment for many of the people whom the private sector now claims to have no use for.

As a genre, the what-ails-America book frequently suffers from last-chapter problems: when writers turn from analysis to solution, credibility erodes. Kaus may have defined the inequality problem too narrowly, but he has written a prescription that is well matched to his diagnosis—something that cannot yet be said for the declining-middle theorists, or for the Clinton Administration, however bold its proposals may appear in the context of recent American politics. As congressional Republicans have been tireless in pointing out, the key decisions about jobs and incomes are made, ultimately, by private employers; if American business believes in a manager-and-drone workplace, it tends to follow that the United States will be a manager-and-drone society. For all the debate about a return to Big Government, the Administration is scarcely more eager to interfere in workplace decisions than are the Republican senators. As a candidate, Clinton spoke of requiring American businesses to commit one and a half per cent of their profits to worker training; since the election, this mild-sounding proposal has been scaled back from a regulation to an advisory guideline. Perhaps it is foolhardy for government to try to mandate such things, but it is not yet clear how, short of mandates, Washington can effect the sort of profound structural changes that the Administration itself seems to see the need for.

KEVIN PHILLIPS takes the occasion of the preface to his latest book, "Boiling Point: Republicans, Democrats, and the Decline of Middle-Class Prosperity" (Random House; $23), to tick off a long list of important people (including Bill Clinton, Mario Cuomo, Lloyd Bentsen, Dick Gephardt, Tom Harkin, Douglas Wilder, Pat Buchanan, Jerry Brown, and Ross Perot) who were influenced by his last book. He is less generous with the names of people who may have influenced him: Kuttner and Levy are mentioned in passing, Bluestone and Harrison not at all. Like "The Politics of Rich and Poor," however, "Boiling Point" is largely a synthesis of observations and ideas that originated with others, supplemented by anecdotes drawn from the news (a powerful clippings file is clearly at work) and by angry tales of politicians fiddling while the electoral base burns. Phillips seems to have written this book mainly in order to bring his excoriation of the Republican Party leadership up to date. But at intervals he broadens his focus from partisan follies to societal ones. The United States in the eighties, he says, was not only repeating errors out of its own past—the free-market heydays of the twenties and of the eighteen-seventies and eighties—but falling into a dangerous pattern common to nations in the aftermath of great bursts of prosperity.

Here his springboard is Paul Kennedy's "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers," published in 1987, which compares the United States with sixteenth-century Spain, seventeenth-century Holland, and nineteenth-century England. For Kennedy, the critical mistake common to all these societies is "imperial overstretch." With uncharacteristic understatement, Phillips suggests that "the

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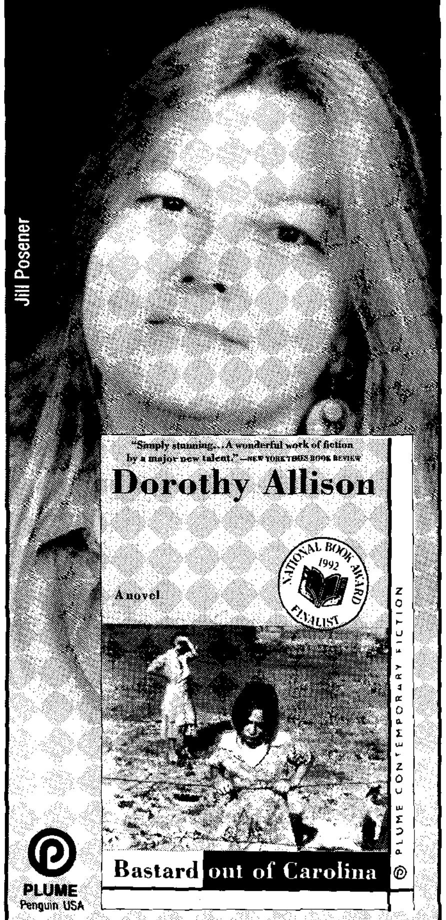
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vital importance of the zenith and then erosion of the middle class . . . deserves more attention." In each case, he writes, an era of growth founded on an expanding middle class, a manufacturing economy, and entrepreneurship yielded to growing inequality and what he calls "financialization"—dominance of the economy by "speculators, rentiers and other passive investors who lived off capital, not enterprise."

Terms like "middle class" and "inequality" do not travel well from century to century; nonetheless, Phillips' parallels are striking. He quotes a Spaniard writing in the early seventeenth century that his society had become "an extreme contrast of rich and poor," and bemoaning the absence of "people of the middling sort, whom neither wealth nor poverty prevents from pursuing the rightful kind of business enjoined by natural law." Some years later, a visitor to Holland deplored the splendor of the country houses being built by stockbrokers and such: "The worst thing is not the building and immense expense of maintaining these fairy-tale palaces, or rather bottomless pits, it is that the distraction and negligence occasioned by this luxury often causes prejudice to business and trade." In 1778, the Dutch newspaper *De Borger* warned its readers that Holland would "shortly consist of little more than renters and beggars—the two kinds of people who are the least useful to the country."

In these passages Phillips transcends the political junkie's tone that prevails elsewhere, and presents an analysis that is almost Tocquevillean in its sweep. Nations rise, he seems to say, by arousing the energy and creativity of a wide spectrum of people—by developing a confident, creative, growing middle class. When the glow of prosperity fades in one place and brightens in another (in Phillips' narrative we see the light moving from Spain to Holland, from Holland to Britain, and from Britain to the United States; he might have included its recent shift from the United States to Japan and the Pacific Rim), what is really happening is the discovery, by each nation in its turn, of some new formula for mobilizing a larger and more dynamic middle class than the world has yet seen.

Phillips likes to deny that he has "moved left." It is society, not he, that has changed, he maintains; and in his odd self-appointed role as political ombudsman for "middle America"—judger of leaders and would-be leaders according to the single criterion of their sensitivity to middle-class interests and perceptions—he is recognizably the same man who laid out the strategy with which Richard Nixon clobbered George McGovern. And yet "Boiling Point" seems to echo a conviction basic to the writing of Harrison, Bluestone, and Kuttner, among others who have come at the inequality question from the other end of the spectrum: that polarization, far from reflecting the emergence of a new meritocracy, is a choice made by powerful elements in society for their own immediate advantage. If he is right, it might be possible for an aroused nation to resist the trend, although, of course, there could be any number of wrongheaded ways of going about it.

Phillips' concern is politics rather than policy. When it comes to solutions, he is content to predict—and, in his present mood, to welcome—a return of activist government. If you are worried about the tendencies he describes, there is some comfort to be had in remembering the ebb and flow of conservatism and activism—until you remember the other historical cycle he writes about, the one involving nations. Phillips, for his part, can't seem to make up his mind about the prospects for change on this deeper level. The process of decline, he writes, "has an air of inevitability"; on the other hand, the United States is not a "relatively small maritime power" like Holland or England but a country with an abundance of land and resources and a vast domestic market. He might also have mentioned, as an asset of indeterminate weight, the literature of which his own two recent books form a small part. If, armed with these works, Americans do not succeed in engineering an economic revival, we can look forward to being remembered as, of all the nations that have prospered and declined, the one that has done so in the highest state of self-awareness. ◆

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Man Who Dreamt of Lobsters

by Michael Collins

(Random House; $19)

THE stories that make up this brash début send a jolt through the staples of Irish fiction: there's no shortage of the Troubles, the Church, petty neighbors, and drink, but Collins surveys them with a young, angry eye, as if he were just discovering their fierce grip. His best characters struggle with similar realizations. In "First Love," a girl waits in a car for hours while her father drinks in a cozy pub, ignoring her hunger and the wounded dog that earned him his drink money. "The Butcher's Daughter" has lost her boyfriend in a botched I.R.A. bombing and recounts her life and her pregnancy sitting at a bar while the bomb she's hiding in a baby carriage ticks beside her. The teen-age killer in "The Meat Eaters" escapes to the Bronx, where he is taken in by the seedy "emerald underground," which appreciates the bulging suitcase of questionable meat he has brought over but does not turn out to be the most welcoming of hosts. The men and women Collins portrays in maturity have learned to compromise and to be compromised; they cope, like the mannequin-maker in "The Enemy," with "the sustained isolation of self-preservation." Though Collins sometimes brings the hammer down too hard, his writing has a clear, anvil-like ring, and beneath the anger there's an eloquence beyond his years.

GENERAL

American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War

by Carole Gallagher

(M.I.T.; $39.95)

BETWEEN 1951 and 1963, the United States government conducted atmospheric tests of a hundred and twenty-six atomic bombs over the apparently barren flats of Nevada. Until recently, the public image of those tests was an idealized one, of benevolent, necessary science—which is exactly the image the agencies sponsoring the tests wanted the public to have. "Everybody knows they lied about it," says one of the residents of rural Utah who lived just downwind of those atomic blasts. But not everybody does know they lied about it. Carole Gallagher, a New York photographer, spent nearly a decade interviewing and photographing the inhabitants of the small Mormon towns downwind of the test sites, and the soldiers who performed the grunt work at the sites and who in many cases were marched directly toward ground zero after the blasts. What she found was a catastrophic pattern of disease caused by radiation exposure, and a radicalized citizenry. "I was happy, full of life before I saw that bomb," one of the soldiers says, "but then I understood evil and was never the same." This book is full of the beauty that terror conceals. It is a primer for all would-be patriots.

Lawrence and the Women: The Intimate Life of D. H. Lawrence

by Elaine Feinstein

(HarperCollins; $27.50)

WHEN D. H. Lawrence announced, early in his career, "If I need any woman for my fictional purpose, I shall use her," he was not just swaggering, and it is difficult to imagine wanting to know more about his intimate life than he, along with numerous biographers, has already told us. Yet Lawrence's novels disguise more than they disclose about the patterns of feminine power and masculine submission in his relationships with women—especially his desperately loyal and violently conflicted marriage to Frieda von Richthofen. (Katherine Mansfield described him as "a little gold ring in that immense German Christmas pudding which is Frieda.") His novels can also fail to convey how he inspired so much affection. Feinstein, employing her keen talents as novelist, biographer, poet, and reader, evokes considerable compassion—if not affection—for a man whose creative energy and deep love for the sensations of living were darkened by a sexual ignorance and anxiety that pained him all his life. She resolutely refuses the roles of psychoanalyst, apologist, and literary critic; and in the end this forbearance decisively shapes a biography that is both evenhanded and moving. ♦

PETER FLEISCHMANN

IN a magazine-publishing world populated chiefly by noisy titans, Peter Fleischmann was an anomaly: he was a quiet publisher. He never raised his voice, he shunned publicity, he listened a lot and said little. Yet he knew his business, he was in charge, and he was successful in a way that titans could only envy. Like his father, who, with Harold Ross, founded *The New Yorker*, in 1925, he cared enormously about the editorial content of its pages, and he read every word of it every week. Yet he rarely visited the editorial floor. His job was downstairs in the trenches of the business department. While he sometimes entertained (as he confessed) a vagrant hankering for what he thought of as the giddy life of the writer, he knew perfectly well that unless the business department came through with the goods the sweet singers upstairs would never sing again.

Many of the singers became his close friends; he was a merry man, and he had a talent for friendship. Some of his friends were of fifty and sixty years' standing, going back to high school. Some dated from the Second World War, when he served in the 106th Infantry Division as a forward observer for the artillery. It was a job that made for a brief life expectancy (he was wounded twice) and durable friendships; one of Fleischmann's frequent companions after the war was a short, ebullient man known to one and all as Mousie, who had been a battery sergeant in the 106th.

In 1953, Fleischmann was made a director of the magazine. He knew he was on a tenure track, and he knew how that looked to others, and he responded with a career of non-stop hard work—in circulation, in advertising, in production. In 1969, he was named chairman of the board, and for another sixteen years, under his aegis and that of William Shawn, the magazine reached new peaks of success.

In 1986, after the purchase of *The New Yorker* by Advance Publications, Fleischmann retired. He did not talk about his separation from his beloved magazine; he simply became even quieter. Illness was already at work on him, and last week, in his seventy-first year, the quietness ended in silence. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY DAVID SHAFFER

MOST of the issues that military spokesmen have raised about allowing open homosexuals into the armed forces concern privacy and, in General Colin Powell's words, "good order and discipline." Some critics of gays in the military, moreover, have claimed that homosexuals commit suicide far more often than heterosexuals do, and they argue that this could seriously affect "good order." There is a sad irony to this, for in recent years gay activists, too, have cited an allegedly greater risk of suicide among homosexuals—as evidence of the effects of discrimination and to argue for greater tolerance.

Gay activists and Pentagon homophobes alike have often cited a statement in a 1989 report by the government's Task Force on Youth Suicide that gay adolescents may account for as many as thirty per cent of youth suicides each year. In my psychiatric practice I have found that the "government" statistics so frequently cited were not prepared by the government and are not statistics. They are estimates based on a projection in a paper prepared for the task-force report. The paper was never subjected to the rigorous peer review that is required for publication in a scientific journal, and contained no new research findings. The estimate that as many as thirty per cent of youth suicides are gay was based on the results of several studies that reported high rates of suicidal feelings and behavior by gays and on Kinsey's conclusion that gays make up ten per cent of the population. A Guttmacher Institute study released two weeks ago supports studies dating back to 1977 which conclude that the actual figure may be much lower than ten per cent.

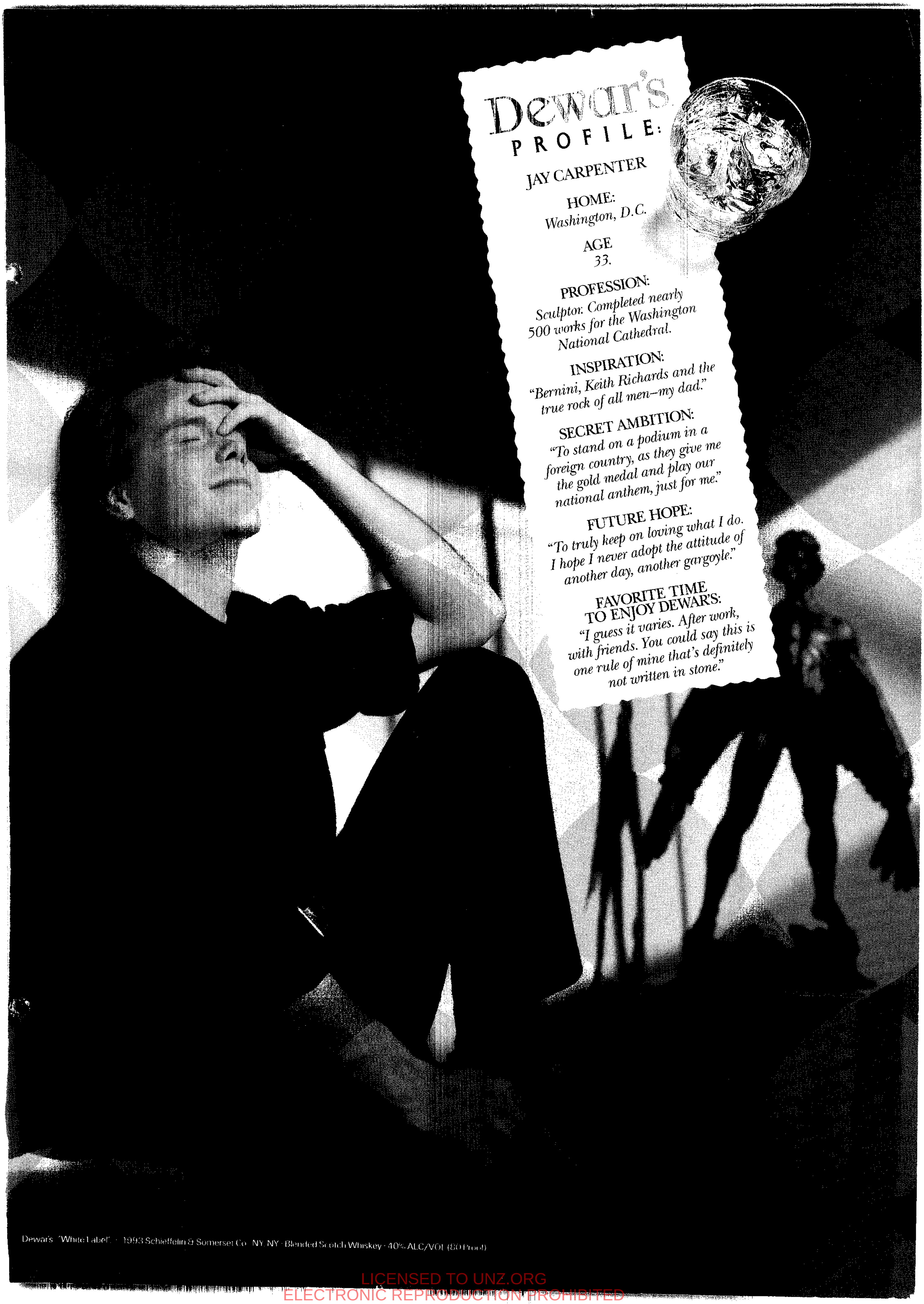
Solid figures about suicide are extremely difficult to come by, because it is a relatively uncommon cause of death (among teen-age boys, the rate is one in every five thousand) and a large number of teen suicides must be studied in order to draw valid conclusions. The procedure used in studying the characteristics of suicide is called the psychological autopsy, and involves interviewing the victim's relatives and friends and obtaining his medical, school, or police records.

My colleagues at Columbia University and I recently carried out such a study on teen-agers and children in the New York area. Patterns of sexual orientation are fluid in the teens, and experimentation is common, but nevertheless, only three of a hundred and twenty (2.5 per cent) were unquestionably known to be homosexual. Four others showed some behavior that could have been indicative of homosexuality. If all of the suicides who showed any evidence of homosexual behavior were indeed gay, then we would have had a total of six per cent gays in our study. Two other such studies have been done: in 1959, Eli Robins, in St. Louis, found no homosexuals in a group of a hundred and thirty-three suicides, and in 1986 Charles Rich, at the University of California, San Diego, found a homosexuality rate of seven per cent among suicides under thirty (the age group most likely to be in the military). No one can say with certainty whether these studies undercount or overcount the percentage of suicides that are gay, but by any measure it is clear that the figure of thirty per cent is far too high.

Where did the idea that gay suicide is very common come from? Possibly from a series of reports on suicide attempts among unusual groups of gays. These studies, some of which the task-force report cited, provide an excellent example of how it is that certain kinds of research can provide misleading conclusions, which come to be accepted as fact. All these studies were based on what are called "convenience samples"—that is, subjects who are easy to find rather than representative or random samples. Among the studies that indicated a high suicide-attempt rate were some that included men recruited in bars; troubled youths in drop-in centers; and psychiatric patients. No such group is likely to be representative of gays in general, of course, and all such groups, because of their members' other problems, can be expected to have high rates of suicide attempts.

As I have focussed my professional life on the mental state—the thoughts and feelings—of suicidal teen-agers over the years, I have been struck by the fact that teen-age suicide victims do not represent a cross-section of the population. Rather, they fall into a small number of groups. The largest is a group of unpredictably aggressive, hotheaded males, who lose control with very little provocation. A second group is quite different: teen-agers who are chronically and irrationally anxious and who may commit suicide just before some feared event. A third group consists of teen-agers who are simply clinically depressed; they see no good in themselves, and feel hopeless about the future.

Suicide is usually a story of misperceptions and misunderstandings, of feelings of despair and lack of control; it cannot be attributed simply to having a difficult life. And it has no place on anyone's political agenda, no matter how worthy. ♦



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